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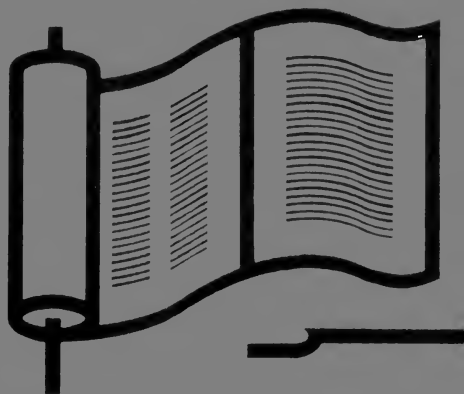
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ISAIAH 40-55 AS ANTI-BABYLONIAN POLEMIC

EUGENE H. MERRILL

Isaiah 40-55 is essentially a polemic against the theology and worldview of the Assyro-Babylonian culture of the Jewish exile foreseen by and already at least partially contemporary to Isaiah of Jerusalem. This is seen in the prophet's pervasive use of polemical rhetorical devices borrowed largely from cuneiform language and literature itself. These devices include rhetorical questions and self-predications in participial form. The peculiar effectiveness of the prophet's polemic lies in his defense of his own God and religious tradition by using ancient Near Eastern genres to demolish the claims of the gods of Israel's Babylonian captors.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

THOUGH there can be no doubt that the most important, overriding theme of Isaiah 40-55 is that of salvation,¹ a major adjunct to that theme is the prophet's assault upon the religio-cultural structure of the Babylonian society from which the Jewish exiles were to be delivered. It was necessary for them to see both the bankruptcy of pagan life and institutions—especially as manifest in the gods and cult—and, by contrast, the incomparability of their God and his historical and eschatological purposes for them.

Isaiah's unremitting rhetorical attack is called "polemic." Westermann sees polemic as an aggressive element of the prophet's preaching conscripted in service of the message of salvation.² It is a shifting of the contest from the battlefield to the law court for the purpose of demonstrating forensically that Yahweh is the Lord of history, the one who is able to link the past with the present and the future.

¹This point was made years ago by E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 3 (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 17.

²C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) 15.

THE DEFINITION AND EARLY USE OF POLEMIC

Polemic is "a controversial discussion or argument: an aggressive attack on or the refutation of the opinions or principles of another." It is also "the art or practice of disputation or controversy."³ The only nonbiblical examples of such a literary type surviving from the ancient Near East are a dozen or so Sumerian and Akkadian disputations of a fabulous nature.⁴ To date no others of a more judicial or formally forensic nature have been attested. The OT, then, is exceptional, and within the OT the disputation sections of Isaiah 40–55 are the more fully developed. One may say, then, that the use of polemic in Isaiah 40–55 originated in Israelite soil, or, at least, not in Mesopotamia.

There are, however, instructive insights to be gained by considering briefly the salient features of the classical rhetoricians. This is not to suggest, of course, that Isaiah was influenced by them, because he long antedated any of them.⁵ But the psychological structures that produced the different traditions obviously had much in common.⁶

Classical Greek rhetoric was defined by Aristotle as the counterpart of dialectic.⁷ It is a subject, he said, that can be treated systematically. He saw the essence of the art of rhetoric to be the argumentative modes of persuasion. Any appeals to the emotion "warp the judgment." This suggests that rhetoric, in the classical sense, is another way of describing what is here meant by polemic, or perhaps polemic is a major form of rhetoric, a point to be made shortly.

Kennedy,⁸ describing classical rhetoric synthetically, finds the following elements: (1) invention—the subject and the arguments to be used in proof or refutation, these arguments consisting of: (a) direct evidence (witnesses, contracts, oaths), (b) evidence from history,⁹ and

³P. B. Gove, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield: 1971) 1753. The etymon is Gr. πολεμέω, "make war, fight"; cf. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979) 685.

⁴S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1963) 217–23; W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) 150–51.

⁵According to Greek tradition the art of rhetoric was invented by either Tisias or Corax in Syracuse between 475 and 450 B.C. See George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton University, 1963) 26.

⁶For this "structuralist" understanding of the relationship of form to common human psychology, see R. Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," *Int* 27 (1963) 439–46.

⁷Aristotle, "Rhetoric," I, 1, in R. M. Hutchins, ed., *Aristotle: II*, vol. 9 of *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952) 587.

⁸Kennedy, *Persuasion*, 10–12.

⁹The appeals to history are interesting in light of the frequent use of history as evidence in Isaiah 40–55; cf. 40:21; 41:8–9; 42:5–9; 43:8–13; 44:6–11; etc.

(c) emotion, gestures, etc.; (2) arrangement, consisting of prooemium (introduction), narration (historical background), proof, and epilogue; (3) style; (4) memory; and (5) delivery. Formally or stylistically, rhetoric consisted of trope and scheme.¹⁰ The former, having to do with detailed figures of speech, usually includes metaphor, simile, personification, irony, hyperbole, and metonymy. Scheme, which refers to structure, suggests the use of allegory, parallelism, antithesis, congeries, apostrophe, enthymeme, and the rhetorical question. One can see that these can and do overlap in places.

Aristotle, whose discussion of rhetoric was the point of departure thenceforth, identified three functional aspects of rhetoric: political, forensic, and epideictic.¹¹ Forensic, which has to do with the court room, was, to him, the most important of the three. He maintained that such a form must have (1) accusation and defense, (2) a rehearsal of the past, and (3) an appeal to justice and injustice. Central in the argument of forensic is the enthymeme, a loose type of syllogism, which may take two forms: (1) demonstrative, that which is created by the juxtaposition of compatible propositions; and (2) refutative, that which is formed by the conjunction of incompatible propositions. The latter, he says, is better because the proof is clearer to the audience.¹²

Aristotle also held that there were two general modes of persuasion—example and enthymeme. His kinds of enthymeme have just been described. Examples could consist of historical parallels or invented parallels, such as illustrations or fables.¹³ The appeal to the past was a favorite device of Isaiah, as will become apparent.

The refutation element of forensic, which Aristotle viewed as being so important, could be advanced by counter-syllogism or by the bringing of an objection. There are four main kinds of these: (1) directly attacking the opponent's own statement; (2) putting forward another statement like it; (3) putting forward a statement contrary to it; and (4) quoting previous decision.¹⁴ It is striking that Isaiah employed some or perhaps all of these refutation techniques.¹⁵

Classical rhetoric continued to find expression in the Hellenistic world and in Rome. Most important for this study, it was taken over and adapted by Jewish scholars in their apologetic against polytheism

¹⁰T. O. Sloan, *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ed. Philip W. Goetz (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1982) 15. 700.

¹¹Aristotle, "Rhetoric," I, 3 (p. 587).

¹²*Ibid.*, II, 22 and 23 (p. 559).

¹³*Ibid.*, II, 20 (p. 589). Perhaps the fables of Sumerian disputation constitute just such examples.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, II, 25 (p. 589).

¹⁵Numbers 2 and 3 were particularly favored by the prophet who often used the very language of his opponents against them.

and other deviations from post-exilic Judaism. The principal genre used was diatribe¹⁶ (similar to polemic). This genre found frequent expression in the Haggadah where Marmorstein has suggested that it occurs in four types: (1) dialogues between two parties (e.g., God and Israel); (2) dialogues between God and individuals; (3) personification; and (4) response to a real or imagined objection by an opponent, usually introduced by "if a man say to you . . ." or "anyone who says. . . ." ¹⁷

L. Wallach, in his study of a dispute between R. Gamaliel II and a pagan philosopher found in *Mekilta, Massaket Bahodesh*, points out that it represents an old sediment of the older Jewish polemic against idolatry. He shows that "its argumentation is the same as the one used since the days of the prophets and its topoi are the same as those employed by Hellenistic Judaism in its defense of monotheism against the aggressions of polytheism."¹⁸ Hellenistic Judaism, of course, drew heavily upon classical rhetorical models.

POLEMIC IN ISAIAH 40-55

In order for one's polemic to be effective one must understand the nature of his antagonist. Specifically, Isaiah needed to be intimately acquainted with both the *Welt* and the *Weltanschauung* of the sixth century Mesopotamian civilization.¹⁹ It is my purpose here to demonstrate that by the revelation of God, Isaiah possessed such knowledge and to indicate the special ramifications of that fact for the prophet's legitimate use of polemic.

At the outset, however, it must be stressed that caution should be used in establishing connections between biblical and nonbiblical phenomena whether literary or otherwise. For example, much of what is characteristic of Isaiah may find its prototypes in earlier Hebrew literature or may not require a Babylonian setting to explain its use. The very object of concern, the disputation or polemic, illustrates this well. Peterson reminds us that, "it is surely a vain enterprise to propose that Deutero-Isaiah was directly influenced by

¹⁶From διατριβή, "occasion for dwelling on a subject" (Aristotle, "Rhetoric," III, 17 [p. 672]).

¹⁷A. Marmorstein, "The Background of the Haggadah," *HUCA* 6 (1929) 185-204.

¹⁸L. Wallach, "A Palestinian Polemic Against Idolatry," *HUCA* 19 (1946) 391. For another study that recognizes both the biblical and classical roots of rabbinic polemic see H. A. Fischel, "Story and History: Observations on Greco-Roman Rhetoric and Pharisaism," in *AOS Middle West Branch Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. Denis Sinor (Oriental Series 3; Bloomington: Indiana University, 1969) 59-88.

¹⁹It is impossible here to enter into the question of the unity of Isaiah and/or the predictive character of chaps. 40-55. For the standard arguments *pro* and *con*, cf. E. J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958) 215-25; O. T. Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1950) 39-50.

Babylonian texts in those cases where he uses characteristically Babylonian terminology which was already common in pre-exilic Israelite literary and cultic traditions.”²⁰ Any cosmopolitan Palestinian man of letters would surely have been familiar with Akkadian literary works and their Sumerian prototypes.²¹

At the same time, there are refinements and evidences of precision in the observations and descriptions of Isaiah 40–55 that require a familiarity, however gained, which transcends general knowledge of the Neo-Babylonian cultural and religious milieu. Koenig correctly chides those who fail to see this provenience when he says that the tendency to minimize or ignore the possibility of a Babylonian influence is frequently observed, and this marks a regression of historical reflection with regard to the way in which authors of the preceding generation state the problem.²² He refers to the extremes to which Kittel went in making these direct connections but says that the general historical probability appears to be that indicated by Kittel.

The exilic community, while never losing its sense of identity with and longing for the Palestinian homeland, nevertheless certainly came more and more to adapt to its new surroundings. There was bound to be an effect on language²³ and in such areas as technology, arts, and crafts that were indigenous to Mesopotamia.²⁴ Many years ago, Cassuto supported the then recent views of Kittel, Sellin, and Gressmann that “Deutero-Isaiah” was often influenced by Babylonian literary style generally and, more particularly, by the diction of the hymns and prayers. He concluded by suggesting that “even if all the particulars of these studies are not to be accepted, the fact of the resemblance must be regarded as completely proven in its general outline.”²⁵

²⁰Stephen L. Peterson, “Babylonian Literary Influence in Deutero-Isaiah” (Ph. D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1975) 2.

²¹Kramer, *The Sumerians*, 292.

²²J. Koenig, “Tradition iaviste et influence babylonienne à l’aurore du judaïsme,” *RHR* 173 (1968) 140, n. 2.

²³Y. Kaufmann, *The Babylonian Captivity and Deutero-Isaiah*, vol. 3 in *History of the Religion of Israel* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1970) 14.

²⁴Cf. David Weisberg, *Guild Structure and Political Allegiance in Early Achaemenid Mesopotamia* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967) 49. Weisberg speaks of the detailed descriptions of craftsmen and craft techniques in Isaiah 40–55, facts which he says “lead us to support the conclusion that Isaiah chapters 40–55 were written by a man who lived in Babylon in the time of Nabonidus.” Of course, the same could be said of one who lived in Jerusalem in 700 B.C. and saw these things by revelation or knew of them through cross-cultural contacts.

²⁵U. Cassuto, “On the Formal and Stylistic Relationship Between Deutero-Isaiah and Other Biblical Writers,” in *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, Vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973) 165. See also D. W. Thomas, “The Sixth Century B.C.: A Creative Epoch in the History of Israel,” *JSS* 6 (1961) 37; and A. Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 219.

From a more negative standpoint, it is necessary to understand that the prophet viewed this exposure, on the whole, as a deleterious experience for the Jews, one that must be interpreted within the framework of the all-encompassing sovereignty of Yahweh. His city would be captured, its temple leveled, and its citizens carried off to a distant and hostile land. The pragmatist would certainly construe this not only as a defeat for Judah but for Judah's God. Apparently, Marduk was supreme after all, as one could see from the might and extent of the Babylonian hegemony. The message of Isaiah must confront these political and historical realities with the hope of salvation and restoration. And that hope must rest on a recognition of the superiority of Yahweh and, conversely, the impotence and even nonexistence of the gods of Babylon. Isaiah's polemic is the vehicle through which this issue could be clarified and then laid to rest.

The message then is all relative to one event. All that the prophet sees and describes—nations, beasts, plants, mountains, hills, depths, and even heaven and earth—is tied into the experiences of the exiles. The whole universe is under the control of Yahweh who will deliver and renew his people.²⁶ This is expressed in protests against the alien religion of their milieu and in apologetical statements about the oneness and absoluteness of Yahweh. This is not the first statement of OT monotheism,²⁷ but in the context of Isaiah it represents a claim for Yahweh in opposition to the Babylonian deities. Without that claim, the exiles might be prone to accept those deities along with Yahweh or instead of him.²⁸

One can well imagine how attractive the pomp and pageantry of the Babylonian cult must have been to the defeated and theologically troubled Jews. As Muilenburg puts it so well, "The great processions like those on New Year's Day, the display of the idols, the drama of the cult, the ancient myths, the impressive rituals, and the elaborate pantheon may easily have tempted not a few to abandon the ways of their fathers and to seek the help of such powerful gods as Marduk."²⁹ The urgency of the prophet's appeal would indicate that the Jews' interest is more than academic. There was obviously a trend already under way to forsake their heritage and become assimilated to the new religious culture.³⁰

²⁶P. A. H. de Boer, *Second Isaiah's Message* (OTS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1956) 100.

²⁷See T. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958) 178–79.

²⁸P. R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought in the Sixth Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968) 42.

²⁹James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 40–66," *IDB*, 5. 397.

³⁰J. M. Wilkie, "Nabonidus and the Later Jewish Exiles," *JTS* 2 (1951) 42. Wilkie suggests that this is evidence of persecution but there is nothing in Isaiah 40–55 to bear this out.

The religious crisis that the prophet faced had to be addressed in a way that would be totally convincing. As Mihelic says, "In order to overcome the attraction of the Babylonian ritual and the natural tendency of a conquered people slavishly to ape their victors, our poet-prophet had to present the concept of Yahweh in categories which would dwarf the gods of the nations from every possible angle of vision."³¹ As we have seen, from the standpoint of classical Aristotelian forensic rhetoric, the strategy of comparing and contrasting opposing propositions is effective and persuasive. And this is all the more true when the protagonist uses forms and formulations drawn from the very inventory of his opponent!

Gressmann was one of the first scholars to recognize that this is precisely what Isaiah did.³² He understood that such borrowing poses a problem to modern readers who are accustomed to regard the prophet as a highly original and imaginative thinker not likely to have imitated others. But Gressmann understood correctly that the prophet is employing the method of contrast. Isaiah wishes to show that Yahweh is infinitely superior to the Babylonian gods and proceeds to do so by using the terminology of their mythological literature to deny the very gods celebrated in that literature.

As Whybray has noted, Isaiah is particularly dependent upon the language and literature of the Babylonian hymns, prayers, and royal inscriptions.³³ This is because these genres are filled with devices such as self-praise, self-predication, and rhetorical questions, all of which are admirably suited to the forensic, disputational style that Isaiah apparently found to be most effective in asserting the claims of Yahweh in opposition to those of the Babylonian deities. These devices appear throughout his composition, but are particularly frequent in the disputation and hymnic sections, precisely where one would expect them to be (see below).

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLEMIC IN ISAIAH 40-55

As just indicated, polemic underlies all that Isaiah 40-55 has to say about salvation and restoration. In the broader sense, that polemic assumes the structure of the trial or disputation speeches, but more particularly it is expressed (whether in disputation sections or elsewhere) by the techniques of rhetorical question and self-predication.

³¹Joseph L. Mihelic, "The Conquest of God in Deutero-Isaiah," *BR* 11 (1966) 35.

³²H. Gressmann, *Der Messias* (*FRLANT* 26; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1929) 61.

³³R. N. Whybray, *The Heavenly Counsellor in Is. 40, 13-14* (SOTS, Monograph Series 1; Cambridge, 1971) 2. Those who have made such comparisons restrict themselves almost entirely to these genres.

These appear and reappear over and over, but here we can only define them and give some examples.³⁴

Rhetorical Questions

Whybray suggests there are a minimum of 72 examples of rhetorical questions in the 333 verses in Isaiah 40–55, 33 of which employ the personal pronoun *אני*.³⁵ And of these Yahweh refers to himself in 40:26; 41:2, 4; 42:24; 45:21.³⁶ When followed by a noun and the relative *אשר* or in expressions such as “who is God but . . .,” there is the clear implication of uniqueness.

The most striking example, perhaps, is 45:21:

Speak up, compare testimony—Let them even take counsel together!
Who announced this aforetime, Foretold it of old?
Was it not I the Lord? Then there is no god beside me,
No God exists beside Me who foretells truly and grants success.³⁷

With this, compare a hymn of Ištar:³⁸

Who is equal to me, me?
Who is comparable to me, me?

Far more common is the application of rhetorical questions to the gods by the poets themselves. And, of course, this is true of Isaiah as well, where the question is not so much “who is like me?” as it is “who is like you (or him)?”

In the famous interrogation of 40:12–26 the rhetorical *אני* is used no fewer than six times in order to establish the incomparability of Yahweh as omniscient and omnipotent creator. By skillful comparison

³⁴All the examples that follow are of rhetorical questions with a divine subject or self-predication. That is, they have the “I-form” in common. These are by no means the only polemical devices the prophet uses (second and third person uses also are employed effectively), but they are the most direct and perhaps most devastating in their forensic appeal.

³⁵The rhetorical with *אני* is frequently used by the worshipers of Yahweh elsewhere in the OT (Exod 15:11; Deut 3:24; 4:7; Mic 7:18; Psa 35:10; 71:19; 77:14; 89:9; 113:5; Job 26:22) but in only one other place by Yahweh of himself (Jer 49:19 = 50:44). M. Smith, *JAOS* 83 (1963) 419, attributes “Second Isaiah’s” use of the interrogative to Persian influences, especially the Gathas, Yasna 44, where a series of questions is asked of Ahura Mazda about creation.

³⁶Whybray, *Counsellor*, p. 22; cf. Exod 15:11; Deut 3:24; 4:7, 8; 5:26; 1 Sam 26:15; 2 Sam 22:32; Jer 49:19; Isa 42:19; Psa 35:10.

³⁷The translation here and throughout (unless otherwise noted) is that of *The Prophets: Nevi'im* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978).

³⁸G. A. Reisner, *Sumerisch-babylonisch Hymnen* (*MOS* 10; Berlin, 1896) n. 56, obv. 1–3; cf. *CT* 15, 7–9, obv. 1–2, trans. now in *ANET*², 576.

of the work of Yahweh to that of the foreign gods, whose idols, in fact, must be themselves created by their worshipers, the prophet lays to rest the pompous claims to incomparability made by these gods throughout the hymnic literature. The following Akkadian hymns to Šamaš, Ninlil, and a personal god must suffice for purposes of comparison:

Mighty, glorious son, light of the lands,
Creator of all the totality of heaven and earth are you, Šamaš³⁹

O lady of mankind, creator of
All things, who guides
The whole of creation.⁴⁰

My god, holy one, creator of all peoples are you.⁴¹

These passages are not couched in the rhetorical question form, though examples can certainly be adduced,⁴² but they are sufficient to show that the incomparability of Yahweh in creation is expressed in this form in Isaiah as a response to claims made by or on behalf of various Mesopotamian deities.

Self-predication

This rhetorical device, common in the Sumerian and Akkadian literature, especially in the hymns of self-praise and royal inscriptions, consists, according to Dion, of nominal phrases in the participial predicate, where the subject is sometimes the divine name and sometimes the divine "I"; or else of brief propositions in which the imperfect translates a permanent truth alternating or not alternating with the participles.⁴³

In the earliest period of cuneiform literature the formula was used with the gods only, mixed at times with narration in the third

³⁹P. A. Schollmeyer, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš* (Paderborn, 1912) n. 18, obv. 8–9.

⁴⁰S. Langdon, *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms* (Paris: Librairie Paul Guethner, 1909) n. 23, obv. 7–10 (Hymn to Ninlil).

⁴¹Lambert, *JNES* 33 (1974) 277, I, 55 (*dingir.ša.dib.ba* to a personal god). The prayer, however, is based on a well-known prayer to Sin (p. 270).

⁴²See, e.g., IV R, 9 (Hymn to Sin), translated by A. Falkenstein in A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und Akkadische. Hymnen und Gebete* (Zurich/Stuttgart: Artemis-Verlag, 1953) n. 44, obv. 24–25; J. Böllenrücher, *Gebete und Hymnen an Nergal*, *LSS* 1/VI (Leipzig, 1904) n. 6; G. Perry, *Hymnen und Gebete an Sin*, *LSS* 2/IV (Leipzig, 1907) n. 3, ll. 54–56.

⁴³H.-M. Dion, "Le genre littéraire sumérien de l' 'hymne à soi-même' et quelques passages du Deutéro-Isaïe," *RB* 74 (1967) 218.

person.⁴⁴ In the Old Babylonian period it was appropriated by kings with the "I am" followed by participial predications.⁴⁵ This continued to be the practice in Akkadian texts down to the Neo-Babylonian period.⁴⁶ Gressmann observed that "Second Isaiah" took this basic and abbreviated form and greatly expanded it into hymnic compositions making it a major part of his literary production.⁴⁷ And, Gressmann said, only "Second Isaiah," of all the biblical writers, uses the formula.⁴⁸

Dion lists four passages which he finds to be especially characteristic of this genre: 44:24b-25, 26; 45:6b-7; 48:12b-13; 50:2b-3. Others, more imbedded in their contexts, are 43:10b β -13; 44:6b-7; 45:12, 18b, 19, 21b; 46:9b-10. Finally, two others, much more brief, and one of dubious authenticity, are 41:4b; 42:8; and 51:13aa, 15, 16ba. He also suggests, with hesitation, the possibility of this element outside of "Second Isaiah," namely, in Deut 32:29; 66:1a; Jer 32:27; Hosea 13:4; Joel 3:17; Psa 46:10; 50:10-12 (= 108:8-10).⁴⁹

Stephen Peterson, along with other scholars, has noted that the "I am" form with full predications is found primarily in the trial speeches and the Cyrus oracle.⁵⁰ In one of these trial speeches, 43:22-28, Yahweh contends with Israel while in the others (43:8-15; 44:6-8; 44:21-22; 45:20-25) the dispute is with the foreign nations and/or their gods. It is unusual to find the hymn of self-praise in a trial speech form but, as Peterson points out, "this prophet has intentionally adapted a Babylonian hymn to function as the verdict in the trial speech. The appropriateness of this adaptation is apparent from the perspective that the trial speeches in question are between Yahweh and foreign nations and gods."⁵¹

This is not to say that every "I am" form is a self-predication in the Babylonian form. Westermann shows that "Second Isaiah" combines two different types of the form, which have two different

⁴⁴For an important study of the "I am" formula, see W. Zimmerli, "Ich bin Jahwe," *Gottes Offenbarung* (München: Kaiser, 1963) 11-40.

⁴⁵Sumerian royal inscriptions, such as votive or dedicatory texts, contained royal names with many titles and epithets, but the predication took the form of finite transitive verbs. See W. W. Hallo, "The Royal Inscriptions of Ur: A Typology," *HUCA* 33 (1962) 15-22.

⁴⁶See Eduard Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte religiöser Rede* (1913; reprint, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1956) 92.

⁴⁷H. Gressmann, "Die literarische Analyse Deuterojesajas," *ZAW* 34 (1914) 285-95. The passages he identified as hymnic self-predication are 41:44ff.; 42:8ff.; 43:11ff.; 44:5ff.; 45:3ff., 18ff.; 46:9ff.; 48:11ff., 17ff.; 49:26; 50:2; and 51:5.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 290.

⁴⁹Dion, "Le genre littéraire sumérien," 217.

⁵⁰Peterson, "Babylonian Literary Influence," 124.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 124-25.

origins.⁵² One always is connected to a word of salvation which, in Isaiah 40-55, usually occurs in the oracles of salvation genre (41:10, 13, 14b; 43:3) or in other words of salvation (41:17b; 43:25; 46:4; 48:17; 49:23; 51:12). This type finds its roots in Israel itself as can be seen in Gen 15:1, 7; 26:24; 28:13; 46:3; 17:1ff; 35:11ff.; Exod 3:6ff; etc.⁵³ The other type is the true self-predication or self-glorification and as such is a type of praise. As Westermann suggests, "Deutero-Isaiah" was the first in Israel to show God glorifying himself in this way. "He took over this non-Israelite, and obviously Babylonian, form with the deliberate polemical purpose of contrasting Israel's God as the one God with the foreign gods who vaunted their power and might against each other."⁵⁴

In these respective types of the "I am" formula the self-predications serve different functions. The indigenous Israelite style serves in the salvation oracle as the basis for the announcement of salvation. Hymnic expansions of the formula in this type express Yahweh's saving relationship to Israel. In the trial and disputation speeches, however, the self-predication distinguishes Yahweh from other gods in polemic fashion. Often it makes the assertion that there is no other God but Yahweh (43:11, 12-13; 45:18, 21; 46:9).⁵⁵ Usually the native form is much more brief, but that which is adapted from the Babylonian style is greatly expanded with relative clauses and participial phrases as predicates, a formula characteristic of Isaiah 40-55.

The assumption is, then, that the expanded form of self-predication characteristic of Isaiah is an adaptation of the Sumerian-Akkadian style with which the prophet would have been familiar. This seems almost certain given the virtual absence of this hymn type in other Hebrew literature and its prevalence throughout cuneiform hymnic and other genres of literature.⁵⁶

⁵²Westermann, *Isaiah*, 26.

⁵³See P.-E. Dion. "The Patriarchal Traditions and the Literary Form of the 'Oracle of Salvation'" *CBQ* 29 (1967) 198-206. Cf. also C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, trans. H. C. White (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) 125. He points out that self-predication occurs already at Mari so that self-predication as a prophetic device goes back to an early, if non-Israelite, setting.

⁵⁴Westermann, *Isaiah*, 26. A good example of a self-predication of Marduk, which Meier says, "appeared to have carried no little weight in the wisdom schools of Sargonic times" (my translation from the German), has been published by G. Meier, "Ein Kommentar zu einer Selbstprädikation des Marduk aus Assur," *ZA* 47 (1942) 241-46.

⁵⁵R. F. Melugin, "The Structure of Deutero-Isaiah" (Ph.D. diss., New Haven: Yale University, 1968) 41.

⁵⁶Westermann, *Isaiah*, 156. Not all scholars accept this, of course. M. L. Phillips, "Divine Self-Predication in Deutero-Isaiah," *BR* 16 (1971) 35, argues that the source of

Dion, in a study previously cited, picked up on ideas developed by Norden and Gressmann, and attempted to show that the use of self-predication in the typical Isaianic form must be traced back ultimately to the Sumerian "hymns to oneself."⁵⁷ He lists eleven examples of these and concludes after studying them that all the pieces he had examined take the form of hymns in the first person, the divine "I" being repeated in them with almost wearisome persistence.⁵⁸ He then outlines the following characteristic structure: proclamation of names and epithets; the position of the god in the pantheon, especially his relationship with the great gods; his beneficial and destructive powers over men and the universe, including enemy lands; and usually a reference to the number and importance of the sanctuaries over which he rules.

Two examples each from Isaiah and the Sumerian sources will suffice for now. The first is the short form found in the oracle of salvation in Isa 43:1-7.

But now thus said the Lord
Who created you, O Jacob,
Who formed you, O Israel:
Fear not, for I will redeem you;
I have singled you out by name,
You are mine.

When you pass through water,
I will be with you;
Through streams
They shall not overwhelm you.
When you walk through fire,
You shall not be scorched;
Through flame,
It shall not burn you.

For I the Lord am your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior,
I give Egypt as a ransom for you,
Ethiopia and Saba in exchange for you.

Because you are precious to me,
And honored, and I love you,
I give men in exchange for you
And peoples in your stead.

the expanded self-predication, which he admits is unique to "Second Isaiah," must be sought not in Babylonian inspiration but in the covenant tradition of Israel.

⁵⁷Dion, "Le genre littéraire sumérien," (1967).

⁵⁸Ibid., 223; the examples he gives are on p. 222, n. 36.

Fear not, for I am with you:
 I will bring your folk from the East,
 Will gather you out of the West;
 I will say to the North, "Give back!"
 And to the South, "Do not withhold!"
 Bring My sons from afar,
 And my daughters from the end of the earth—
 All who are linked to My name,
 Whom I have created,
 Formed, and made for My glory.

Most scholars see this oracle of salvation as a piece made up of two shorter ones (1-4, 5-7) but combined by the prophet into one unit. It may be analyzed as follows:

Introduction	<i>1a</i>
Assurance of salvation	<i>1ba, 5aa</i>
Nominal substantiation	<i>1bδ, 5aβ</i>
Verbal substantiation	<i>1bβγα</i>
Outcome	<i>2-4, 5b-7</i>

The self-predications appear in the introduction in the participial forms בארך and יצרך and in v 3 where Yahweh describes himself as קדוש ישראל מושיעך and אלהיך. These brief ascriptions are, of course, not unique to Isaiah and can hardly be said to be dependent on Babylonian analogues.⁵⁹

In the disputation texts, however, there appears the expanded self-predication, an example of which is 44:24-28:

Thus said the Lord, your Redeemer,
 Who formed you in the womb:
 It is I, the Lord, who made everything,
 Who alone stretched out the heavens
 And unaided spread out the earth;
 Who annul the omens of diviners,
 And make fools of the augurs:
 Who turn sages back
 And make nonsense of their knowledge;
 But confirm the word of My servant
 And fulfill the prediction of my messengers.
 It is I who say of Jerusalem, "It shall be inhabited,"
 And of the towns of Judah, "They shall be rebuilt";

⁵⁹Note, for example, the frequent uses of participial ברא outside Isaiah as cited by Paul Humbert, "Emploi et portée du verbe bârâ (créer) dans l'Ancien Testament," *TZ* 3 (1947) 401-22.

- 11 Mullil hat mir den Himmel gegeben
 <hat mir> die Erde <gegeben>
 12 ich—<die Himmelsherrin bin ich>.
 13 Die Herrenschaft hat er mir gegeben,
 14 die Herrinnenschaft hat er mir gegeben
 15 den Kampf hat er mir gegeben, die [Schla]cht?
 <hat er> mir <gegeben>,
 16 die Flut hat er mir gegeben, den [wi]r belwind (?)
 <hat er> mir <gegeben>,
 17 Den Himmel hat er als Kappe auf mein
 Haupt gesetzt,
 18 die Erde als Sandale an meinen Fuss gebunden,
 19 den reinen Göttermantel an meinen Leib gebunden,
 20 das reine Szepter in meine Hand gelegt.

Though the style of these lines is not participial, it is certainly self-predicative. One might well assume that the traditional self-introduction ("I am") with a following string of names and epithets made up the lacunae. And probably these took the form of appositional nominatives or participles.⁶⁷ The "I am" does survive in lines 9 and 12.

An Akkadian example is the Gula hymn of Bulluṣa-rabi, a composition that probably dates from the Persian period.⁶⁸ In the first 187 of a total of 200 lines the goddess Gula speaks. In the opening section the deity introduces herself with participles, nominal clauses, and several statives. The passage reads as follows:

- 1 The goddess, the most powerful of all deities that reside in shrines—
2 I am an aristocrat, I am a lady, I am resplendent, I am exalted,
3 My location is lofty, I am feminine, I have dignity,
4 I excel among the goddesses.
5 In heaven my star is great, my name in the underworld,
6 Mention of me is sweet—men discourse on
7 Sound health and the healing touch,
8 My great name is Nintinugga.

The remainder of the hymn consists of alternating sections in which the goddess praises herself and then her spouse. Bullutsa-rabi is

⁶⁷This is the form taken by other Sumerian hymns of this type. See Falkenstein, *SAHG*, n. 24 ("A Šulgi Hymn") in which ll. 1–19 are the "I am" section, following which are statements with finite verbs; and so throughout the Šulgi hymns (Castellino, *Two Šulgi Hymns [BC] Studi Semitici* 42 [Roma: Università di Roma, 1972] B, 11–12, 82, 119–21; C, 1–6). For the structure of this form, see von Soden, "Hymne," *RLA* 4 (1972–1975) 539–40.

⁶⁸W. G. Lambert, "The Gula Hymn of Bulluṣa-rabi," *Or* 36 (1967) 105-32. Lambert suggests a date for its original composition between 1400 and 700 B.C. (p. 109).

an individual on whose behalf prayer is made in the last section (ll. 188–200) to the two deities. As we indicated above, the Akkadian exemplars of the self-praise are limited to only three or four, though, of course, the hymns and prayers in the second and third person are very common.

CONCLUSION

The preceding, on which little comment has been made, are sufficient to show that the self-predication formula is attested in both Sumerian and Akkadian hymnic literature as well as in Isaiah. And since it is lacking elsewhere in Hebrew literature (with the exceptions already noted) one must allow the possibility at least that Isaiah appropriated and adapted this particular literary vehicle as a heuristic and polemical device with which to exalt and praise Yahweh in opposition to the gods of Babylon. It seems that one must agree with Dion's assessment when he says that the concrete example of this borrowing by the prophet may help us to appreciate better the marvelous power of assimilation by which the Word of the living God always utilizes to its own ends the ancient religious heritage of humanity. Indeed, the prophet of Yahweh does not hesitate to benefit from authentic resources of the pagan milieu in which he finds himself. A master himself of ancient eloquence, he seizes well the majesty and power of persuasion of discourse by which gods and kings generally reveal their splendor in the Orient. He adopts therefore this method, up to that time unused in Israel, and uses it in the service of the good news concerning the Creator and Savior.⁶⁹ Without doubt, the most effective polemic is that in which the protagonist (mis)uses the arguments of his adversary and does so by a sarcastic, mocking use of the very language of his opponent. Much more of this could, without question, be communicated by the special nuances that are possible to oral discourse. But no one of the exilic community could fail to be impressed by the subtleties as well as the overt expression of the prophet as he attempted to demonstrate to them the incomparability of their God.

⁶⁹Dion, "Le genre littéraire sumérien," 233–34.

MORAL CONFLICTS AND EVANGELICAL ETHICS: A SECOND LOOK AT THE SALVAGING OPERATIONS

WILLIAM F. LUCK

Many evangelical ethicists have rightly reacted to Joseph Fletcher's situationalism while wrongly choosing the ground from which to respond. Having conceded to Fletcher the reality of moral conflict among the laws of God, these ethicists must embrace incoherent ethical systems that deal with the wrongly imported moral conflict by introducing what amounts to a situationalism of their own. In particular, examination of the greater good alternative of Norman Geisler and the lesser evil alternative of Erwin Lutzer reveals their failure to avoid situationalism. Their failure substantiates the concept that one cannot have a coherent plural absolutism and yet admit to the conflict of (absolute) moral rules. Since the Scriptures stand solidly behind the presence of a plurality of absolute moral rules, the evangelical ethicist must reject the possibility of real moral conflict.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

JOSEPH Fletcher thought that he had exposed the folly of any system of morality that was composed of more than one universal obligation. In his *Situation Ethics*, he argued that traditional, orthodox morality (which he called "legalism") entangled itself in its own rules.¹ Said Fletcher,

as statutes are applied to actual situations, something has to give; some latitude is necessary for doubtful or perplexed consciences. Inexorably, questions arise as to whether in a particular case the law truly applies

¹Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: the New Morality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 123.

(doubt), or as to which of several more or less conflicting laws is to be followed (perplexity).²

"Nothing in the world causes so much conflict of conscience," continued Fletcher, "as the continual, conventional payment of lip service to moral 'laws' that are constantly flouted in practice because they are too petty or too rigid to fit the facts of life."³

To illustrate the inadequacies of multi-ruled morality, Fletcher strewn his pages with case studies of "perplexity" which he called the "penumbra."⁴ And he concluded from their presentation that, "prefab code morality gets exposed as a kind of neurotic security device to simplify moral decisions."⁵

Following the publication of Fletcher's *Situation Ethics*, there was a flurry of activity on the part of Evangelicals. Most of their concern centered around the confutation of Fletcher's positive proposal: situationism. But the negative challenge of Fletcher was largely ignored, perhaps because Evangelicals felt that doubt and perplexity of conscience were by-products of the fallen state of the world, and therefore insufficient to call divine obligation into question. Yet in ignoring the question of the conflict of conscience, Evangelicals were also ignoring the challenge that their ethics is incoherent or inconsistent when it tries to comprehend the ethical "gray areas" that perplex the conscience. They failed to see the full thrust of Fletcher's argument, namely, plural (absolute) rules + their conflict in application = an incoherent (and therefore unacceptable) system. Were Evangelicals blasting Fletcher's system without defending their own? Could it be that the battle against situationalism, effective as it was, was being fought from the wreckage of the sunken ship of traditional morality?

In the early 1970s several evangelical scholars concluded that Fletcher's torpedoes of moral conflict had indeed severely damaged the usual (if not traditional) evangelical ethical ship. These Evangelicals reiterated their acceptance of a system of plural universal rules and agreed with Fletcher that in this sinful and fallen world those rules sometimes come into conflict. These scholars began to reconstruct the ethical ship, and from their salvaging operations two distinct methodologies soon appeared in print. The first way to salvage evangelical ethics is known as hierarchicalism or the greater of goods alternative. Its major exponent has been Norman L. Geisler who set forth his position in three books (*Ethics: Alternatives and Issues*, *The Christian Ethics of Love*, and *Options in Contemporary*

²Ibid., 21.

³Ibid., 137-38.

⁴Ibid., 135.

⁵Ibid., 137.

Christian Ethics), and an article ("Biblical Absolutes and Moral Conflicts").⁶

The second system is called ideal absolutism or the lesser of evils alternative. Although this second view was set forth and rejected by Geisler, it was adopted by Erwin Lutzer (*Morality Gap: An Evangelical Response to Situation Ethics*)⁷ and John Warwick Montgomery (*Situation Ethics, True or False*).⁸

Elsewhere I have argued that both of these positions are invalid due to equivocation with regard to the crucial concept of moral conflict.⁹ I argued that the only kind of moral conflict which need concern Evangelicals is the kind where one law of God requires an action that another law of God prohibits. Cases of alleged moral conflict were analyzed (especially those from the Bible) and it was found that in all cases it was possible to act in a way that did not violate a command. Thus it was concluded that salvaging operations such as Geisler's and Montgomery's were not necessary since their basic premise that God's laws actually foster moral conflict was open to question. My purpose here is to show how both these systems come to ruin because they accept the alleged reality of moral conflicts.

THE GREATER GOOD ALTERNATIVE

Geisler sets forth his view as follows:

Love is never caught on the horns of a dilemma. There are levels and spheres of love and one is always higher than another. Each love command is absolute in its area. But when that area overlaps with another area, then the lower responsibility of love should be subordinated to the higher. . . . Each of the absolute commandments of the Bible is absolutely binding on the relationship it specifies. There are no exceptions. . . . However, when one of these relationships, which are wrong in themselves, overlaps with another area, then one's duty to the lower may be suspended in view of his responsibility to do the higher. There are no exceptions to absolute commands but there are some

⁶*Ethics: Alternatives and Issues* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971); *The Christian Ethic of Love* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973); *Options in Contemporary Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); and "Biblical Absolutes and Moral Conflicts," *BSac* 131 (1974) 219-28.

⁷*Morality Gap: An Evangelical Response to Situation Ethics* (Chicago: Moody, 1972). Lutzer has since, privately, abandoned this position.

⁸Joseph Fletcher and John Warwick Montgomery, *Situation Ethics, True or False* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1972).

⁹William F. Luck, "Ethical Decisions: Non-Conflicting Absolutism" (unpublished paper presented at the spring meeting of the midwestern section of the Evangelical Theological Society [1974]).

exceptions (*sic*) in view of higher priorities of love. There is always a greater good.¹⁰

At first blush this system seems splendid. It is not so naive that it refuses to accept alleged moral conflicts that Scripture and experience "amply manifest." It is not so unscriptural as to deny the plurality of commandments. And it offers its followers a way to act in conflict so as not to be guilty of breaking a commandment. In short, Geisler seems to accept both of Fletcher's premises (multiple commandments and conflicts) and yet deny his conclusion (normative incoherence). How does Geisler do it?

He does it with linguistic mirrors. How can anyone resolve an irresolvable conflict of laws (one requiring what another prohibits)? A moral conflict, like an ordinary language dilemma, that can be resolved is not really a moral conflict in the first place. It may have seemed to the perplexed and unreflective mind to be a real conflict, but reflection reveals that there is a way of escape. If there is a way to resolve the moral conflict on the normative level, then the conflict is only apparent.

This can be put another way. Without irresolvable conflict there is no need to devise a methodology to handle conflict. On the other hand, if it is irresolvable then no method can be devised that will resolve the normative incoherence. Since Geisler's resolution involves the exempting of obligation, it is a normative resolution and therefore reveals that the supposed conflict of norms cannot have been irresolvable in the first place. And since resolvable conflicts are only *prima facie* conflicts, Geisler cannot really be serious about being a conflict theorist. He must be a crypto-non-conflicting absolutist.

If all this is so obvious, how has Geisler's hierarchicalism managed to stay afloat? The answer lies in Geisler's use of "linguistic mirrors." The impression is given that both of the conflicting rules do apply throughout the situation while the obligation of one of them is not binding upon the person in the situation. Thus, according to the methodology, there are two kinds of rules: those that both apply to the situation and bind the person in the situation and rules that apply to the situation but do not bind the person in the situation. It is the latter of these rules (which Geisler refers to as the "lower law") that is analytically improper. There simply is no such thing as a non-binding, yet applicable moral rule. Obligation is part of the denotative meaning of a rule or law. A rule is a statement of obligation. Remove the obligation and you are left with a string of words or at most a descriptive sentence, but not a moral rule.

At this point the hierarchicalist may protest that his system never completely eliminates the obligation of either of the conflicting laws.

¹⁰Geisler, "Biblical Absolutes," p. 226. The second "exceptions" should read "exemptions." It was a typographical error according to Geisler.

He will protest that the obligation of the lower rule is superseded but not eliminated or abolished.¹¹ He will no doubt suggest an analogy from Newtonian physics:

To borrow an illustration from the natural realm, there are no exceptions to the law of gravity for physical bodies but a nail may be exempt from "obeying" the law of gravity by its "obedience" to the higher physical force of a magnet.¹²

In other words, the lower of the conflicting rules retains its obligation, it is just that that obligation is not as strong as the obligation of the higher of the conflicting laws.

The problem here is that the hierarchicalist has been led astray by a poor analogy. The force of gravity is measurable, but moral obligation is not. It is a wrong way of speaking, for example, to say, "We are more obligated to love God than men." We should say, "We are obligated to love God more than men." A rule either obliges or it does not. There are no degrees of obligation.

But even if there were such a thing as a stronger law conflicting with a weaker law, the illustration actually undermines hierarchicalism. For if the weaker law is binding in the situation at all, then for it to be ignored is for it to have been disobeyed. And, if in a situation of conflict one of the laws has to be disobeyed, then guilt is incurred and the choice of the "greater good" is at one and the same time the choice of the "lesser evil." The obedience of the higher law is the disobedience of the lower law. And this is the very coherence problem that Fletcher waved at the old system. In short, if both commands bind, then their conflict is normative incoherence. If one of the commands does not bind, then there is no conflict (see Appendix A).

Thus, it is evident that the hierarchical system cannot get where it wants to go. If it alters the obligation, it resolves the irresolvable conflict by denying the conflict. If it does not alter the obligation, it retains normative incoherence. Hierarchicalism is indeed caught between a rock and a hard place. The system has to move one way or the other. Either it has to deny the reality of moral conflict or it has to accept the charge of being an incoherent system. Insofar as the theory pretends normatively to resolve¹³ the irresolvable,¹⁴ it is analytically absurd.¹⁵

While the above criticism raises doubt as to whether or not hierarchicalism really accepts moral conflicts, a second criticism raises

¹¹Geisler, *Ethics*, 130.

¹²*Ibid.*, 19.

¹³*Cf. ibid.*, 72, 134.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁵In *Options* (p. 99) Geisler attempts to answer this criticism by explaining what he meant by "irresolvable" in *Ethics* (p. 118). It is certainly proper for him to clarify what

the question whether or not the method allows its proponents to accept more than one universal moral rule. By definition, an absolute rule is a rule that does not admit of exceptions. That is to say that there is no condition under which an absolute rule is not binding.¹⁶ In the case of moral conflicts, Geisler does not argue that one "absolute" rule has an exception, but that the person facing the conflict is

he "really" meant, and to show where he may have been misunderstood. However, his clarification is, unfortunately, a study in shifting linguistic sand. In his first paragraph he offers as synonyms for "irresolvable" the terms "real" and "inevitable." Using these he belittles his critics by saying that they cannot be serious in suggesting that a conflict that can be "ultimately resolved" is not "real and inevitable." But then that was not the criticism. Geisler is the one who used the terms "irresolvable" and "resolvable." If he equivocates he can hardly hold his critics responsible, but he makes it worse by confusing his own meanings in *Ethics*. In that book on p. 118, it is clear that Geisler does not mean either real or inevitable by "irresolvable." The issue there is not whether the conflict is real or inevitable, but whether it can be resolved by showing one of the alleged duties to be not applicable or both able to be obeyed at the same time. That is the meaning Geisler gives to "irresolvable" in paragraph two, and that is the meaning assumed in the criticism. The issue is not whether a real conflict can be resolved or whether an inevitable conflict can ultimately be resolved. No one denied that there are real conflicts such as that between good and evil, but then it is not proper to use a word like "irresolvable" of such a conflict. If Geisler has made a bad choice of terms in *Ethics*, his critics can hardly be blamed for taking his word according to its normal use.

But this too is not the issue, for given Geisler's second paragraph definition of "irresolvable," it seems that he did not make a mistake in choosing the term to describe what he sees as the essence of the nature of the conflict. Says he, "We say that the conflict was 'irresolvable' only in the sense that there was no 'give' in the force of the commands. Neither law 'backed down'; both continued to demand with the same absoluteness that is theirs by virtue of their grounding in God" (*Options*, p. 99). That is what is meant in this paper by "normative" irresolvability. In other words, one cannot find a way to understand one or both of the commands not to be binding and applying in the situation. But then Geisler proceeds to tell us that, "God intervenes in love and exempts a man from the demands of a command which cannot be kept without breaking a higher command." In other words, God removed the demand so that it does not have the same absoluteness that it had by virtue of its grounding in his nature. Note that while this is close to saying that God simply does not hold us guilty for not keeping the lesser demand, Geisler must steadfastly deny that it is only a matter of removed guilt. He must say that it is the "demands" that are exempted. He insists on a "normative" resolution, not just *fiat* forgiveness. If there is no normative resolution, then the commands remain in normative conflict. If this is the result, Fletcher is right and Geisler is just a conflicting absolutist with an easy as well as a forgiving God. On the other hand, since Geisler admits that there is a normative resolution (the exempting process) he reveals that he is not logically serious about the conflict having been other than *prima facie* in the first place. If this is the case, then Geisler is simply a confused non-conflicting absolutist. The latter is probably the case. In any case, the critic does not deny that there are real *prima facie* conflicts of norms (i.e., conflicting general rules), but only that Geisler is surely wrong in insisting on non-*prima facie* conflict of duty that can be normatively resolved.

¹⁶Cf. Geisler, *Ethics*, 131: "the absolute norms always apply; there are no exceptions."

exempt from the obligation to obey the lower "absolute" rule. The reason for the exemption is the presence of a higher "absolute" rule. In other words, the presence of a higher rule creates a condition in which the lower rule does not apply. Thus, it is seen that there is a condition in which the lower rule does not apply. Hence, the lower rule cannot be an absolute, and exemption and exception are two sides of the same coin.

Since in the hierarchicalist system all laws lower than the highest law are laws subject to an exempting process, only one law in the hierarchicalist system can be an absolute (see Appendix B). As such it is unacceptable to Evangelicals who find that Scripture teaches the plurality of absolutes. Geisler himself asserts this.¹⁷ And it is interesting that in order to make the system acceptable to himself and others, Geisler resorts to coining such terms as "contextual absolutism" and "local universals."¹⁸ These terms only obscure this important fact: since not all of the Ten Commandments can be the "highest law" on the hierarchy, only one of them can be an absolute.¹⁹ And, if they are not absolutes, what are they? Well, at best they are general rules, at worst they are mere maxims. Evangelicals cannot accept such an ethic.²⁰

Though Geisler's hierarchicalism claims many absolute moral rules, it can have only one. His attempts to argue otherwise reveal,

¹⁷Ibid., 74ff. Geisler's system is not like Fletcher's single absolutism, since Fletcher's absolute (love) is formal and Geisler's is substantive.

¹⁸Ibid., 132.

¹⁹Geisler ("Biblical Absolutes," [p. 227]), notes the "hierarchy of the Ten Commandments," but denies that such a hierarchy leaves at least nine commandments mere general rules.

²⁰Geisler realizes that his system is open to criticism on this point. In *Ethics* he returns to the issue several times, apparently never really satisfying himself (cf. p. 132). And in "Biblical Absolutes" he found it necessary to bolster the sagging point with three new arguments (cf. p. 227). Each of these arguments is designed to show how lower-than-highest laws can justifiably be called "absolutes." First, he says, "they are absolutely binding as such on the particular relationship toward which they are directed." This means that they are absolutely binding when not in conflict with a higher rule. But any general rule is binding as such, but not binding when it comes to a situation that includes an exempting-condition. Second, he says, "when there is a conflict, it is an absolutely binding ethical obligation to follow the higher law revealed by God in His Word." But this is a *non sequitur*. The obligation to follow the higher law is a rule-governing rule. The fact that the rule-governing rule is absolute does not in the slightest make any of the rules that it governs absolutes. Third, Geisler says, "implied in the above is the truth that God has established absolutely the very order of commandments based upon their proximity to His very nature as holy and loving." This also is a *non sequitur*. The fact that the order of rules is absolute does not make each rule absolute. None of these arguments establishes that lower laws are absolutes. At best they establish that Geisler's form of absolutism has only one absolute. For a similar criticism, cf. Lutzer, *Morality Gap*, 102ff.

upon analysis, an unacceptable one-absolute absolutism that would at times annul even the greater of the commandments.²¹

There are many more criticisms²² against this salvaging operation. It is, however, sufficient to have shown that the system is self-contradictory. Furthermore, restatements of the system fare no better than its original formulation.

²¹Cf. Matthew 5:19.

²²The following are some of the other criticisms that could be developed more. (1) The Scripture rejects any attempt to excuse non-compliance with lower rules on the basis of higher rules (cf. Matthew 5:19; 23:23; etc.). (2) Hierarchicalism is based upon an inadequate, neoplatonic (thing-centered) axiology in which values are *nonmoral* (cf. *Ethics*, pp. 115ff.); with this axiology there is no way, e.g., to show whether lying is more or less valuable an act. (3) The hierarchy of laws is said to represent a hierarchy of values. Geisler never offers his readers a list of either. Instead, he gives two slightly different lists of principles by which the reader evidently is to draw up his own lists. But the principles themselves need to be hierarchically arranged before they are useful. All this tells the reader that it is most difficult—if not impossible—to determine what the greater-good is (cf. *Ethics*, 115–21; and *Love*, 76–87). This criticism reveals that hierarchicalism is impractical. (4) The system claims to be a pure deontology (duty centered ethics), but it seems actually to be a crypto-teleology (consequence ethics). What the hierarchicalist has done is to locate the nonmoral conditions that make situations (consequences) good, hinted at their hierarchical order (the order of intrinsic values), and stated that there must be a hierarchy of laws that represents the hierarchy of values (cf. *Ethics*, 114–15). But in a truly deontological system, the rules themselves have moral value. In Geisler's system the rules have only relative (moral?) value. In short, Geisler is really more concerned about the production of nonmoral good consequences than he is about the following of moral rules. The rules are always subordinate to the principles which identify good consequences. This is true of all teleologies. Consider the sad case of the rule not to bear false witness (*Ethics*, 18, and "Biblical Absolutes," 226). For Geisler, a false witness, which is prohibited by a commandment, is said to be a good action if it is done "for the sake of life-saving." Unless Geisler is a motivist (which type of ethical thinking he rejects [cf. *Ethics*, 22]), he is saying that the action of lying is sometimes a good (when it contributes to the saving of life) and sometimes wrong (whenever life-saving is not at issue). In other words, lying is a relative good and the command not to lie is a relative command. The rightness or wrongness is determined by the situation (and consequences) and not by the rule. Put another way, lying is a contributory good (cf. W. Frankana's *Ethics*) but not an intrinsic wrong. (In fact, is it possible for a neoplatonic thinker to be serious about intrinsic wrong?) Geisler, then, is at best an inconsistent "rule-utilitarian." Part of the problem in pinning Geisler down on this issue is that he is resolving two very different types of conflict (see my "Ethical Decisions," where it is argued that alleged instances of moral conflict are either contingency conflicts [where the breach of one law only leads to the keeping of another law] or necessary conflicts [where the breach of one law is the keeping of another law]). In that paper it was held that none of the latter type had been found. Geisler himself makes such a distinction in *Ethics*, 94–95. Most of the time Geisler is dealing with the former type which are always resolved by teleological calculations. The rest of the time he is simply confused, and does not see that one of the supposedly conflicting rules is not an absolute. For a similar criticism, cf. Lutzer, *Morality Gap*, 104. (5) The concept of a hierarchy is incompatible with the concept of the conflict of rules. Rules on one level can only conflict with rules on the

THE LESSER-EVIL ALTERNATIVE

Lutzer's formulation of the basic argument of the lesser of evils position is as follows:

the majority of genuine moral conflicts arise because of previous sinful actions. A man may make a foolish vow to kill another man. Now he is forced either to break his promise or become a murderer. In either case he is sinning. Here he must choose between the lesser of two evils. . . . Having violated one instruction, he became entangled and therefore *had* to sin. In this case two universals were clearly in conflict, but only because one universal had already been broken. Many other similar illustrations could be given where an individual had to sin, but ideally such situations need not occur . . . if no universals were previously broken.²³

Of course, this is not to deny that sin must be confessed to a merciful God.

As in hierarchicalism, the lesser of evils position accepts moral conflict as a given that must be resolved. But whereas in hierarchicalism the resolution was normative and accomplished by following the situation-governing rule (i.e., when in moral conflict obey the higher law and receive an exemption from the lower law), in the lesser evil view the resolution in no way attempts to resolve the normative incoherence, i.e., resolving the irresolvable. The lesser evil alternative offers a different sort of resolution, a mere pragmatic one. It simply tells the person caught in conflict which moral obligation to follow and which to disobey, and leaves the morality and immorality up to the rules themselves.²⁴ Normative incoherence is not resolved, but left behind.

There have been many criticisms of this system, but most of them have missed the mark.²⁵ Three criticisms, however, merit discussion. First, the lesser of evils position is incoherent. Indeed, that is the

same level. If each rule is on a different level, no conflict is possible (and the picture of overlapping does not picture what Geisler thinks it does). On the other hand, if two rules are on the same level (and hence able to conflict) then the hierarchy is simply incomplete (see Appendix C).

²³Lutzer, *Morality Gap*, 107.

²⁴The rule-governing rule of the lesser of evils position could be phrased as follows: when in moral conflict, minimize evil. It is not clear if *this* rule involves a moral obligation such that violating it actually involves violation of two moral rules: *this* rule and the rule prohibiting the greater evil. Probably only the latter carries such a moral obligation.

²⁵Geisler himself raises three criticisms in his writings. (1) "It is inconsistent with the nature of an all-loving God to hold a man guilty for doing the unavoidable" ("Biblical Absolutes" p. 224). The point here is that the lesser evil view destroys the

very essence of Fletcher's criticism. It is better to struggle with showing how commands really do not conflict than to admit normative incoherence.

Second, if the system of morality is normatively incoherent, the system reflects badly upon the author of the system, in this case God himself. If Biblical ethics is like a coat that is seen by the light of alleged moral conflicts to be tattered and torn, surely it would be just to question the ability of the tailor. Cannot God devise a system of ethics that is harmonious not only in abstraction but also in application?

The response to this criticism is that it is the finite nature of the world and the fallen condition of man that accounts for the conflicts of God's laws.²⁶ But neither finitude nor fallenness are sufficient to absolve God of responsibility. Finitude will no more make the laws of God susceptible to conflict than the incarnation made the attributes of God susceptible to confusion.²⁷ And while fallenness certainly

basis of responsibility and denies that *ought* implies *can*. However, it is not clear from Scripture and systematic theology that *ought* does imply *can*. The biblical way of putting the matter of responsibility seems to be that guilt results from sinful action and that sinful actions are intentional actions that are against the will of God. Lutzer distinguishes between actions that are intentional/unavoidable and those that are unintentional/unavoidable (*Gap*, 108). Then, too, it is not clear that lesser evil methodology does deny that *ought* implies *can*. According to the view, a person ought to obey each of the conflicting rules, and he can do each. The problem comes when one says that according to the view a person ought to do both (at the same time). The view does not hold that it is possible to do both at the same time. But is this just a semantic problem? (2) "There is a most serious problem this view raises with regard to the sinlessness of Christ. We are informed that Christ is our moral example. . . . Further we are assured that He is our complete moral example. He faced all the kinds of moral situations that we will face. He is 'one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning' (Heb. 4:15). But if there are real moral conflicts and Jesus faced them, then sinning was inevitable for him too. He must have sinned. But the Bible says clearly that He never sinned in word, thought or deed (cf. I Peter; I John). It follows, then, that there are no situations where a lesser evil is called for" ("Biblical Absolutes," 225). However, Geisler has eisegested the text. The text is referring to all kinds of physical temptations, not to all kinds of ethical situations. It is doubtful that Geisler can show that moral conflicts are physical or that they are even kinds of temptations. (3) This system holds men guilty for doing their moral best ("Biblical Absolutes," 225). Not so at all. It holds men guilty for intentionally doing moral evil.

²⁶Both Lutzer and Geisler adopt this argument. For Lutzer's version see *Gap*, 107. For Geisler's version see "Biblical Absolutes," 224; *Love*, 76; and *Options*, 73-80.

²⁷There is no better illustration of this point than the one Geisler uses in *Love*, 76, to prove the opposite point. Says Geisler, "The pyramid of principles emerge as the light of God's unchanging love passes through the prism of human experience thereby casting a spectrum or order of God's laws." In fact, God's love and harmonious rules pass through the prism of finitude and form a spectrum of laws that, like the colors of the spectrum, do not overlap or conflict.

accounts for the disobedience of God's laws, it is not at all clear how it makes possible the conflict of God's laws. God's laws are of two kinds: those that he can fashion by his will, and those that come necessarily from his nature. He can formulate those that come from his will so that they do not conflict with each other or with those from his nature. And those that come from his nature remain harmonious.²⁸ To say that God's laws come into conflict with each other is to impugn the integrity and ability of God to devise an ethic that is internally consistent and coherent.

But there is a far more telling criticism against the lesser evil alternative. In a case of supposed moral conflict, each of the conflicting rules is obliging moral evil as well as moral good. To take the case of Jephthah, the command to keep one's promises to God (Eccl 5:5) also (according to Lutzer's methodology) obliges Jephthah to murder/sacrifice his daughter. On the other hand, the obligation not to commit sacrifice/murder (Exod 20:13) is also obliging Jephthah to break his promise to God. And it seems such is the case in every alleged instance of moral conflict. Command A obliges an action that is evil according to command B, and command B obliges an action that is evil in reference to command A. To put it bluntly, in situations of moral conflict, God is obliging one to commit moral evil.²⁹ It will do no good to evade the issue by running to the condition that enabled or caused the conflict (viz., the fallen state of the world and the sinful choices of men). Nor will it do to run to the fact that each of the commands also commands moral good. Nor will it do to protest that God has made a way to resolve it all by telling us to minimize evil. The fact remains: if there is a true moral conflict, such that one command obliges action that another command prohibits, then God requires moral evil. And any God who requires moral evil is himself a devil and not the God of evangelical and biblical faith.³⁰

²⁸Lutzer says that sinful choices bring about entanglement, but if one analyzes the commands that conflict in such cases, one finds that at least one of the commandments involves promise-keeping or the obedience of human authority. And such duties are not, in the biblical use, "absolutes." Nor are they—except in a general, or relative, sense—a part of the Ten Commandments.

²⁹Fletcher made this point when he debated another lesser evil theorist, John Montgomery. Geisler has a convoluted form of the criticism in his "Biblical Absolutes," 225. But Geisler does not realize that this criticism is just as valid against his own position. Without the obligation to do moral evil there would be no conflict for anybody. The point at which this criticism of the lesser evil position should be leveled is not at the obligation to do the lesser evil—where Geisler seems to place it—because that rule-governing rule directs its obligation only to the minimization and not to the actualization of evil.

³⁰Lutzer's most recent statement in print on this topic can be found in his *The Necessity of Ethical Absolutes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981).

CONCLUSION

Both of the salvaging operations fail to save the day for evangelical ethics. This second look at them reveals that Fletcher was right, one cannot have a coherent plural absolutism and admit to the conflict of (absolute) moral rules. The lesser-evil alternative impugns the wisdom and morality of God by making him the author of a confused system of ethics that sometimes obliges men to do moral evil. The greater good view is impossible as stated and unacceptable when restated as a one-absolute absolutism (see Appendix D).

The way to refute Fletcher is to deny one of his premises. Either the plurality of (absolute) moral rules or the conflict of rules must be eliminated. Since Scripture stands solidly behind the plurality of rules, evangelical ethics has no choice but to reject the reality of moral conflict.

Fletcher realized that the refining of ethics (which he called *casuistry*) was possible.³¹ He just prematurely abandoned the ship. He found the course of casuistry hard sailing. Confusing the ship of biblical rules with the barnacles of human rules, he simply decided to float his own boat. It follows that the salvaging business is unnecessary for Evangelicals. The only way to improve evangelical ethics is through the serious exegesis of Scripture.

APPENDIX A

It is difficult to know exactly what Geisler means by exemption. The meaning is obscured by metaphors such as "dethroned." However, there are only five ways of looking at the issue. First, by means of exemption Geisler is removing all of the obligatoriness from the sentence that was up to that point a moral law. Second, the exempting process removes only part of the obligatoriness of the law. Third, the methodology leaves each law with its original obligatoriness (i.e., all that it ever had). Fourth, and following upon the third, the exemption removes the concept of guilt while not affecting the obligatoriness. Fifth, exemption eliminates the punishment while not affecting obligatoriness or guilt.

Geisler cannot mean the latter because he denies that guilt is incurred by the disobeying of the lower law. Yet it is not clear that he really means that guilt is removed without some removal of obligation. Geisler (*Ethics*, 115, 130) says that the person not obeying the lower law breaks it. If he is serious about breaking the lower law,

³¹Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* 19. Fletcher's experience was with the Catholic and Jewish perversions of casuistry. His criticism at this point moves off into a straw-man argument.

then he might hold the fourth view. However, he is inconsistent on this point and seems to conclude that "when a lower principle or norm is suspended, it is not really broken" (*Ethics*, 130). Now if the lower law is really broken, then the concept of exemption (suspension) must involve the affecting of obligation. Therefore he cannot hold the fourth view. Nor can he hold the third, which also assumes that the obligation of the rule is not in any way affected. And in the body of this article it has been argued that whether he adopts the second view (as he seems to do on page 19 of *Ethics*) or the first view (as he seems to do on page 18 of *Ethics*) he holds a view that is analytically impossible.

One might note that the concept of exemption is related to the concept of immunity. Perhaps Geisler is thinking in terms of a disease model of obligation where the obligation may be present but cannot affect the person inoculated. If so, then it must be argued that this idea involves improper analogy. When disease is present in a body, but inoculation prevents the adverse effects, there is no parallel to morality except perhaps in the sense that the mere presence of a rule (with its obligation) need not effect obedience (because the person has been inoculated by original sin; "ought" does not imply "does"). Moral obligation is *sui generis*. Moral obligation is not like the obligation of nature's laws. One cannot have a rule that obliges but from which one is immune. The closest thing to what Geisler wants is the situation in civil law where a statute that prohibits travel on public streets faster than 55 miles per hour is justifiably not kept by emergency vehicles. But most correctly, the rule is seen as a general rule that admits such exceptions.

APPENDIX B

In retrospect, hierarchicalism may be said to have more than one absolute. It is possible to distinguish between a "simple" absolute and a "complex" one. A simple absolute is one that is entirely substantive. For example, "You shall not murder." This and only this is what is meant by an absolute. In discussing this sort of rule, Geisler often confuses it with a "general rule," which has the same form, e.g., "You shall not kill." Only ethical reflection (consideration of exempting-conditions/exceptional cases) will reveal whether the rule in question is general or truly absolute. In a revealed system, this means consideration of exceptional cases revealed in the text of Scripture, etc.

A general rule such as "You shall not kill," with an appendage of a heuristic or "rule-governing" clause, i.e., "except when killing is necessary to adhere to a higher rule," produces, in the totality of clauses, what might be called a complex absolute. This is correct if the defined exceptions, in principle, are inclusive. Geisler's system has

a great number of these complex (and partly substantive) "absolutes." But he never speaks of such an inclusion as an absolute, but only of the substantive portion as absolute. The closest Geisler comes is when he responds to a criticism that his absolutes are not really absolute. He says that "the very gradation of values by which the conflicts are resolved is absolute. For example, it is absolutely established in accordance with the nature of God that in an unavoidable conflict between God and parent one must put God first" (*Options*, 94.). But in any case, this complex sort of absolute is really nothing more than a general rule with inclusively stated exceptions. Geisler confusedly calls the general rule in all these complex rules absolutes. That is denotatively incorrect, for it is that portion of the rule which is qualified by the appended clause. Indeed the very strangest thing in the whole debate is Geisler's apparent inability to recognize the difference between a general rule and an absolute. It is as if his apologetic against those who admit only to general rules (chap. 3 of *Ethics*) has poisoned him from ever using the term in his own ethics. In fact, those who try to draw the distinction and do the careful sort of definitional work required in properly limiting the meaning of an offense term (e.g., lying) receive his sharp criticism. Of Murray he speaks harshly, referring to Murray's ethical refinement as trying to salvage his absolutism by "stipulative redefinition." Yet the same sort of redefinition is going on in Geisler, it is just that in Geisler the definition being altered is the term "absolute" itself. Murray is coming to a possible (and it is hoped, biblically correct) definition of lying. Geisler is coming to an impossible definition of absolute.

APPENDIX C

Hierarchicalism is a confused conglomeration of several different methodologies all pulling against each other but held together by the misuse of terms. Below are the different systems that Geisler could hold if he were to restate his method eliminating contradicting elements and clarifying key terms.

Non-conflicting plural absolutism could be derived by seeing that any resolution eliminates moral conflicts. The concept of irresolvable conflict ("Biblical Absolutes," 224 *et passim*) must be softened to *prima facie* conflict. And, he must be willing to argue that at least two of the absolutes are not subject to the exempting process. This system could be acceptable to evangelicals if Geisler would preserve at least 13 absolutes: (1) the Ten Commandments, (2) the "first and greatest of the commandments and the second like unto it," and (3) the obligation to love.

Single (non-conflicting) absolutism could be derived from the admission that only one moral rule is truly absolute (vis-a-vis the

exempting process). He would still have to admit that moral conflicts are only *prima facie*. The existence of a hierarchy eliminates the possibility of moral conflict. This system, which seems to be the most logical restatement of what he wants, should be unacceptable to Evangelicals.

The lesser of evils position could be derived by his realizing that the retaining of the concept of moral conflict necessitates the obligation to do evil as well as the obligation to do good. To adopt this position the hierarchy must be dumped at least at some point so as to allow moral conflict. This position is unacceptable to Evangelicals since it implies that God obliges moral evil.

In addition to the above, it should be noted that unless Geisler puts more stress upon the intrinsic value of the rule rather than upon the nonmoral values that actions produce, his system will be little different than that of rule utilitarianism. In fact, unless he adopts some form of nonconflict theory, he must revert to some form of teleological calculation. Anthony Flew points out in his *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on "Means and Ends" that normative conflict can only be resolved by teleology. Lutzer realizes this and his talk of choosing to do the action that has the least evil consequences evidences it. Geisler's seven principles in *Ethics* are like the sort of reasoning that goes into a utilitarian calculation.

APPENDIX D

There is an element of truth that underlies each of these unacceptable systems. First, they both arise from the perplexity and doubt of which Fletcher spoke. There are times when it seems that one must go against one of the commands of God. This occurs when one is not sure whether or not a command applies to the situation. It is the job of the biblical ethicist to formulate the best system possible for such people. The need for such formulative efforts is crucial. It is a sad commentary upon the evangelical subculture that so little systematizing has been done in recent years. It is not sufficient to present biblical ethics as a jumble of rules and regulations (liberally sprinkled with culturally relative rules) and let it go at that. Evangelicals need a sound presentation of the system of ethics that is restricted to what the Bible says and implies.

Second, from hierarchicalism one can rightly learn that there is a hierarchy of love's laws. Seeing this may well make one more sensitive to those weightier matters of the law (the inward moral virtues) that need constant attention lest mere outward obedience of the ceremonial elements crowd them out. And, to appreciate the beautiful architecture of the scriptural norms, another hierarchy is needed, one of considerable scope (the "greatest/first" commandment includes but

is of wider scope than the “second-like-unto-it”). There is also a need to consider the hierarchy of sins—that some actions are worse than others—in order that one may exercise special care not to practice that which is abominable to God. Finally, Evangelicals need to think on the hierarchy of good consequences so that within the bounds of the (deontological) rules they may strive to produce the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of neighbors. But hierarchy does not imply conflicts. The very same passages in Scripture that talk of hierarchy also caution against the thought that the keeping of the lower removes obligation to the higher or that the keeping of the higher removes the necessity of following the lower.

Third, from the lesser evil alternative, Evangelicals must face the unhappy fact that in a fallen world, men are sometimes faced with the necessity of choosing among evil actions. But the evil that one may be obliged to do is not moral evil but rather physical evil. For example, there may be forced upon a nation the unhappy choice of submission to a foreign tyrant or the military defense of the nation. Both are physical evils. But to the nation faced with the choice of just war or submission, neither action would be intrinsically evil in the moral sense. God does oblige physical evil (e.g., capital punishment, war, etc.) but not moral evil.

A CLASSIFICATION OF IMPERATIVES: A STATISTICAL STUDY*

JAMES L. BOYER

Much popular exegesis of the Greek imperative mood rests on unwarranted assumptions. Analysis of the actual usage of the imperative in the NT reveals that many common exegetical conclusions regarding the imperative are unfounded. For example, a prohibition with the present imperative does not necessarily mean "stop." And when it does, it is context, not some universal rule of the imperative, that determines the meaning. The imperative mood has a wide latitude of meanings from which the exegete must choose in light of contextual clues. The temptation to standardize the translation of the various imperatival usages should be resisted.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

ONE of the clearest and simplest statements of the basic significance of the imperative mood is given by Dana and Mantey. "The imperative is . . . the mood of volition. It is the genius of the imperative to express the appeal of will to will." They go on to compare it with the other moods. "It expresses neither probability nor possibility, but only intention, and is, therefore, the furthest removed from reality."¹ This study will offer a classification of the

*Informational materials and listings generated in the preparation of this study may be found in my "Supplemental Manual of Information: Imperative Verbs." Those interested may secure this manual through their local library by interlibrary loan from the Morgan Library, Grace Theological Seminary, 200 Seminary Dr., Winona Lake, IN 46590. Also available is "Supplemental Manual of Information: Infinitive Verbs," and "Supplemental Manual of Information: Subjunctive Verbs." These augment my articles, "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 3-27 and "The Classification of Subjunctives: A Statistical Study," *GTJ* 7 (1986) 3-19. I plan to prepare other supplemental manuals as time permits, beginning with one on participles.

¹H. E. Dana and J. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: MacMillan, 1943) 174.

ways the imperative is used in NT Greek, together with statistical information and comparisons, and a discussion of several of the questions related to the understanding of this mood.

CLASSIFICATION OF IMPERATIVE USES

The list of uses proposed here is more detailed than is usually found in the grammars. Many speak of commands and entreaties, or requests; some add permission and condition. This study would add a few that are small in number but interesting enough to merit separate treatment. They will be listed in order of frequency of occurrence.

Commands and Prohibitions

By far the largest number (1357 or 83%)² belong to this category, which includes both positive and negative commands. The latter, often listed separately under the term 'prohibitions,' are introduced by some form of the negative particle μή. There are 188 of them; they will be discussed below separately regarding what some suppose to be peculiarities of usage. Here they are simply included under the term "commands."

Commands include a broad spectrum of concepts—injunctions, orders, admonitions, exhortations—ranging from authoritarian dictates (a centurion ordering his soldier to go or come, Matt 8:9), to the act of teaching (Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5:2, cf. 12ff.). Commands are distinguished from requests as "telling" is from "asking." The distinction, however, is not made by the mood used but by the situation, the context. They are used in the language of superiors to subordinates and of subordinates to superiors, and between equals.

Most commonly, imperatives are in the second person (85%), but they are unlike their English counterparts in that they also occur in the third person (15%). Later in the article, this third person imperative will be discussed in detail.

Requests and Prayers

The second class of imperatives is made up of prayers, petitions, and requests. Much fewer than the commands, they still are quite numerous (188, 11%),³ enough to silence the bothersome claim, "This is not asking, it's telling; it is in the imperative mood." This ought not seem strange to English speakers who use it like the Greeks in prayer ("Lord, help us") and in everyday speech ("Pass the potatoes").

²In addition to these are 28 which I have given alternative identification as command; see below.

³There are 7 more given alternative identification as requests.

Frequently in the NT this usage is introduced by a word indicating that it is a request: ἐρωτάω, ἐπερωτάω / 'ask', προσεύχομαι / 'pray'. Indeed, the Lord's prayer is a series of imperatives.

Requests are usually in the second person (93%) and singular (80%). The tense is usually aorist (80%) which is in accord with the usual Greek practice and reflects the tendency of requests and prayers to be occasional and specific. It contrasts sharply, however, with the use of tenses in the other categories of imperative in the NT, where the present tense outnumbers the aorist in every instance. The overall comparison is 47% aorist to 53% present.

While most requests and petitions are positive, there are a few negative (4 with μή and the present imperative, 5 with μή and the aorist subjunctive.)

Permission

Next in order of frequency (27 or 2%)⁴ is that category of imperatives that expresses permission or consent. Rather than an appeal to the will, this category involves a response to the will of another. "The command signified by the imperative may be in compliance with an expressed desire or a manifest inclination on the part of the one who is the object of the command, thus involving consent as well as command."⁵

This permission may be either willing and therefore welcome to the speaker (as in Luke 7:40 when Jesus asked Peter if he might speak with him, and he answered, "Say it, teacher") or reluctant (as in John 19:6, where Pilate gave permission to the Jewish leaders to crucify Jesus although still insisting that he found no fault in him) or neutral (involving permission given in a situation where either course of action was acceptable, as in 1 Cor 7:15). Rev 22:11 has 4 of these permissive imperatives; 2 are contrary to the will of the speaker, 2 are favorable.

The second person imperative is used in 17 of these, compared with 10 uses of the third person. The present tense occurs 17 times to 10 of the aorist.

Exclamations

In 16 examples the imperative appears as an exclamatory word introducing another statement, thus acting as an interjection. It stands before a hortatory subjunctive clause or a negative prohibition subjunctive and serves as an attention-getter, a call to give heed:

⁴Three more are given alternative identification as permission.

⁵Dana and Mantey, *Grammar*, 174.

ὄρατε (4), ὄρα (3), ἴδετε (1), ἀκούετε (1), ἀκούσατε (1), ἄγε (2), ἄφες (3), ἄφετε (1). These might well be identified as interjections; indeed, two other words that are clearly interjections (δεῦρο and δεῦτε) occur in the same constructions and actually have imperatival endings though they are not verbs.

Greetings

An idiomatic form of salutation uses the imperative of the verb χαίρω (χαῖρε 5, χαίρετε 1). The usual meaning of the word is "to make glad, to rejoice," but apparently the sense in this construction is broader: "to be well, to thrive."⁶ Hence, it is an expression of good will like our "Good morning," or "How are you?" (expecting an answer such as "I am well"). Another in this category, ἔρρωσθε, is the perfect imperative of ῥώννυμι / 'to be strong, to thrive, to prosper' (the usual formula in closing a letter). The total in this group is 7.

Challenge to Understanding

Similar in some respects to the category called "Exclamatory" is this group that might be called a challenge to understanding (4 examples). These are clearly verb forms, not interjectional, but they are a call to know, to perceive, to understand. Luke 12:39, "And be sure of this, that. . . ." The verbs involved are γινώσκετε, βλέπετε, and ἀκούετε. All of these could also be identified as simple indicatives.

Conditional

Probably the strangest and most controversial category of imperatives is that which seems to express some conditional element. Here it is necessary to distinguish two groups. The first is neither strange nor controversial; it includes a large number of instances (about 20) where an imperative is followed by καί and a future indicative verb. It says, "Do something and this will follow." This combination clearly is capable of two explanations. It could well be a simple command followed by a promise. Or it could be understood to imply that the promise is conditioned upon the doing of the thing commanded, "If you do something this will follow." Jas 4:7, 8, 10, "Resist the devil, and he will flee. . . . Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. . . . Humble yourselves . . . and He will exalt you." The familiar prayer promise, "ask . . . seek . . . knock . . ." (Matt 7:7, Luke 11:9; cf. also John 16:24), belongs here; it could mean "if you ask you will

⁶J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book Co., 1889) 664.

receive." Examples of this kind have been assigned to an alternate classification; they are either command or condition.

The second group consists of a few passages where condition has been proposed to explain a difficult passage. Each passage will be discussed briefly.

John 2:19

Jesus said to the unbelieving temple-defilers, "Destroy this temple and . . . I will raise it up." John explains that he was speaking of the temple of his body. Obviously, this is not a command or request. Conceivably, it could be a reluctant permission; "I will let you do it, then I will undo it." But it seems to many expositors that the imperative is conditional, "If you do, I will. . . ." It is almost, "Do it if you dare!"—a challenge with a threat attached.

2 Corinthians 12:16

This passage begins with an imperative, ἔστω δέ, "But be that as it may," (NASB). The KJV has "But be it so." Literally, it is "Let it be." The sense seems to be, "Whatever may be the answer to the question I just asked, it doesn't matter; it doesn't change the situation." Or, to use an English slang expression (without the negative connotation), "So what?" In this passage, then, the significance of the imperative mood seems either to involve permission ("Permit it to be so") or condition ("If that is the way it is, so be it").

Ephesians 4:26

The problem here is in the first word, ὀργίξεσθε 'be angry'. It is an imperative. Two opposite explanations have traditionally been offered.

(1) The anger here is said to be "righteous indignation," the kind of anger God has toward sin, and which Jesus manifested on occasion. Thus the passage is a command. But it seems impossible to understand this in a good sense in a context (cf. v 31; 2:3; also Matt 5:22, Rom 12:19, Col 3:8, 1 Tim 2:8, Tit 1:7, Jas 1:19) that condemns anger and orders it to be put away. The word used here, ὀργίζω and its cognates, is never used in a good sense except in references to the anger of God and Christ. And "righteous indignation" seems never to be approved for men. In fact, the scripture says, "For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (Jas 1:20). The righteous anger of God operates in the area of judgment, and that area is out of bounds to believers, at least for the present. Besides, if this is a command to show "righteous indignation," why is the warning added to end it before the sun goes down?

(2) Attempt is made to see here an example of some imperative use other than command; possibly conditional, "If you do get angry don't sin by nursing it too long; don't let the sun go down on it." Or possibly it is an unwilling permission, "Be angry if you must."

Alternative Classifications

As already indicated, it is sometimes difficult to decide among these possible classifications. In such cases alternate choices have been given. The categories involved and the number of instances where an alternate classification is possible are as follows:

Command or Condition (see above)	20 ⁷
Command or Request	6 ⁸
Permission or Condition (see above)	3 ⁹
Command or Permission	2 ¹⁰
Permission or Challenge	1 ¹¹
Request or Condition	1 ¹²

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Present Versus Aorist in Commands

Compared with other Greek literature, the NT is unusual in having a large number of present imperatives as compared with the aorist (53% present, 47% aorist, 0.2% perfect). The reason for this undoubtedly lies in the character of the literature. Largely hortatory, it teaches universal moral principles: "always be doing. . . ." And this is one of the special provinces of the present imperative.

What is the Difference?

Probably the most discussed question encountered in the study of the imperative mood deals with the distinction in meaning between the present and aorist tenses. It is here, too, that the most confusion and misrepresentation occurs. The solution to the confusion is to be found in examining the basic aspectual significances of the tenses generally, rather than in the study of the imperative mood specifically. In other words, finding the distinction between the present and aorist imperatives lies not in looking at mood but at tense.

⁷Matt 7:7 (3 times), 27:42; Mark 11:29; Luke 10:28, Luke 11:9 (3 times); John 7:52, 16:24; Acts 9:6 (twice), 16:31; Gal 6:2; Eph 5:14 (twice); Jas 4:7, 8, 10.

⁸Matt 9:38, 11:15, 13:9, 43, 17:20; Rev 4:1.

⁹John 2:19, 2 Cor 12:16, Eph 4:26.

¹⁰1 Cor 11:6 (twice).

¹¹1 Cor 6:4.

¹²John 1:39.

It is obvious that the distinction is not in the time of the action, for only in the indicative mood is time involved; all the other moods are future in time reference. Rather, the difference is in the way the speaker chooses to speak of the types of action.¹³ There are three basic kinds: (a) durative, continuing, repeated, or customary, expressed by the present tense; (b) simple action, "do it," expressed by the aorist tense; and (c) completed and lasting, expressed by the perfect tense. Major grammars are usually clear on these.¹⁴

Thus the present imperative expresses a command or request that calls for action that is continuing or repeated, often general, universal, habitual; action that characterizes the doer. "Love one another" means, not "do something," but "always be doing things for one another." On the other hand, the aorist imperative is used to command or request an action that is specific and occasional, dealing with everyday procedural decisions, or in general admonitions simply to say, "Do it."¹⁵

¹³Grammarians have long referred to "kinds of action" (*aktionsart*) for the basic distinction; durative, punctiliar, completed. But many have confused these terms to refer to the actual way the action took place; the aorist came to be thought of as single occurrence—instantaneous, once for all, never to be repeated, happening in a punctiliar way—rather than the speaker's choice of a punctiliar way of speaking of it without regard to the way it happened, simple (not single) occurrence. More recently the term "aspect" has come to be used which seems to be less prone to confusion.

¹⁴A. T. Robertson, in his *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 832–54, surveys both the history of the Greek language and also the history of what the grammarians have said about it. He uses the "kind of action" approach to the tenses, but attempts to safeguard it from the confusion between the action itself and the way the speaker speaks of the action: "The 'constative' aorist just treats the act as a single whole entirely irrespective of the parts or time involved. If the act is a point in itself, well and good. But the aorist can be used also for an act which is not a point. . . . All aorists are punctiliar in statement" (italics mine). A similar approach is used in F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by Robert Funk (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1961) 172. N. Turner, in his *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 3: *Syntax* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963) 59ff., 74–78, agrees basically, although he uses terminology that sometimes introduces confusion (for example, he equates punctiliar with instantaneous and comes up with a "once for all" aorist concept). In his treatment of the imperatives in another of his books, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965) 29–32, 41, he strongly embraces the misconception that a present imperative implies "Stop." The classical Greek grammars, W. W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar*, rev. by C. B. Gulick (Boston: Ginn, 1930) 284–85, and H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1976) 409–11, clearly present this same understanding of the significance of tense in imperative verbs and warn against the same abuses.

¹⁵The perfect is extremely rare in the imperative, with only four examples in the NT. Two (Eph 5:5, Jas 1:19) involve the verb οἶδα, which is perfect in form but present in meaning, one (Acts 15:29) is a stereotyped epistolary form, the other, πεφίμωσο (Mark 4:39) expresses a true perfect sense.

Popular Misconceptions

By far the most prevalent of the inadequate and misleading claims of popular exegesis is that the present imperative with μή means "stop" doing something that is already being done, and the corollary to it, although not so commonly insisted upon nor stated, says that the aorist prohibition (μή with aorist subjunctive) means "don't start" doing something that is not yet being done. The "rule" is used to prove such statements to the effect that the Christians at Ephesus were continuing to be thieves and drunkards (Eph 4:26, 5:18).

The origin of this notion is usually traced to a "barking dog" story told by Moulton. He quotes a Dr. Henry Jackson as saying, "Davidson told me that, when he was learning modern Greek, he had been puzzled about the distinction [between μή with the present imperative or aorist subjunctive] until he heard a Greek friend use the present imperative to a dog which was barking. This gave him the clue."¹⁶

Is the claim valid? If its proponents had read further in Moulton's grammar, they would have found him demonstrating that, while it is a helpful insight into one possible meaning of the present imperative, it is not the only one; he cites examples where it does not work and continuing the quote, summarizes:

μή ποίει accordingly needs mental supplements, and not one only. It is "Stop doing," or "Do not (from time to time)," or "Do not (as you are in danger of doing)," or "Do not attempt to do." We are not justified in excluding, for the purposes of the present imperative in prohibitions, the various kinds of action which we find attached to the present stem elsewhere.

Many of the beginning and intermediate grammars present this inadequate and misleading concept, often without any suggestion that it is true only part of the time. Dana and Mantey state, "The purpose of a prohibition, when expressed by the aorist subjunctive, is to forbid a thing before it has begun; i.e., it commands to never do a thing. But a prohibition in the present imperative means to forbid the continuance of an act; it commands to quit doing a thing."¹⁷ They even quote Moulton's "barking dog" story with no hint of his warning against taking this as the whole story. The treatment is similar in

¹⁶J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Vol. I: Prolegomena* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906) 122-23.

¹⁷Dana and Mantey, *Grammar*, 299, 301.

many of the newer grammars, such as Kaufman,¹⁸ Kistemaker,¹⁹ and Powers.²⁰ Best²¹ makes it better by using the qualifying word "usually," although that word inadequately represents less than one fourth of the examples. Turner has a good statement in his grammar,²² but strongly applies this inadequate rule in another of his books.²³

The final demonstration of the fallacy of this explanation of the distinction, of course, must be found in a study of the NT passages where the construction occurs. There are 174 instances of the present imperative with μή. The results of a study of these are summarized here.

General exhortations (no indication about present)	100
Previous action explicit in context	26
Previous action explicit, but already stopped	4
Previous action probable from context	12
Previous action denied in context	32
—Exhortations for a future time	14
—Nature of action such that it can be done only once: "stop" meaningless	4
—Context explicitly says it is not already being done	8
—Context implies it is not already being done	6

As indicated earlier, general exhortations strongly predominate. In some cases the negative form is simply a form of litotes; "do not be careless" is used for "always be careful" (1 Tim 4:14). Sometimes the present seems to point to attempted action (Matt 19:6, "don't try to divorce . . ."; certainly not "husbands, stop divorcing your wives"). Often it is difficult to make sense if the "stop" translation is attempted.

In several instances the context makes clear that the action had been going on previously, but had already been stopped, as indicated by such words as μηκέτι, πάλιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν.²⁴ To use "stop" for "don't start again" makes the rule rather meaningless.

¹⁸P. L. Kaufman, *An Introductory Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Palm Springs, CA: Haynes, 1982) 123.

¹⁹S. Kistemaker, *Introduction to Greek* (Jackson, Miss.: Reformed Theological Seminary, 1975) 91.

²⁰W. Powers, *Learn to Read the Greek New Testament* (Sidney, Australia: Anzer, 1983) 51.

²¹Best, "A Supplement to Williams Grammar Notes" (Dallas Theological Seminary, n.d.) 40a.

²²N. Turner, *Syntax*, 74–75.

²³N. Turner, *Insights*, 29–32, 41.

²⁴John 5:14, 8:11; Gal 5:1; Eph 4:28. Cf. 1 Tim 5:23; it hardly can mean "Stop drinking water;" rather, "Don't always be a water-drinker (drink something else once in a while)."

The exhortations addressed to a future (e.g., eschatological) time²⁵ also prove the fallacy of the "stop" translation—unless one adopts the concept that at that future time everyone who reads these statements will be guilty of doing these things and is enjoined to "stop"!

In four instances²⁶ the nature of the action forbidden is such that it can be done only once, so that to "stop" is meaningless. Note that in these examples precisely the same construction is used for two opposite cases, one a previously existing condition, the other of the same condition not previously existing.

The 8 passages listed²⁷ where the context explicitly says that the action forbidden was not previously going on are crucial; any one of them is proof of the fallacy of the notion under discussion. In Luke 22:42, Jesus prayed, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." The last clause, *πλὴν μὴ τὸ θέλημά μου ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν γενέσθω* contains *μὴ* with a present imperative, yet it cannot be translated "Stop letting my will be done"; for in the larger context of the Bible, Jesus specifically denies that he ever did his own will, but always did the will of his Father (John 5:30, 6:38, 8:29). In speaking to unbelievers who were accusing him of blasphemy (Jn 10:37), he said *μὴ πιστεύετε μοι*. It cannot mean "Stop believing in me." In 1 Cor 14:39 Paul certainly did not tell the tongues-loving Corinthians to "stop forbidding to speak in tongues," even though it is a present imperative with *μὴ*.

Early Christian literature can also be cited in regard to this discussion. In Ignatius's Letter to Polycarp²⁸ an interesting example of a present imperative with *μὴ* occurs: *μηδὲν ἄνευ γνώμης σου γινέσθω μηδὲ σὺ ἄνευ θεοῦ τι πρᾶσσε, ὅπερ οὐδὲ πράσσει, εὐστάθει / 'Let nothing be done without your approval, and do nothing yourself without God, as indeed you do nothing; stand fast'.*

In public buses in modern Greece, a sign is frequently posted above the driver's seat: *ΜΗ ΟΜΙΛΕΙΤΕ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΟΔΗΓΟΝ*. It is present imperative with *μὴ*. Does it mean, "Stop talking to the driver"? That would hardly be appropriate to one who was boarding the bus and has not said a word. Does it mean, "Don't speak to the driver"? That would be unfortunate for those who need directions. Does it not rather mean, "Don't carry on a conversation with the driver"? That would be a dangerous practice, and the sign makes

²⁵Matt 10:29, 34, 24:6; Mark 13:7, 11, 21; Luke 9:3, 10:4, 7, 12:7, 12:32, 14:12, 21:21; Acts 1:20; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 John 10 (twice).

²⁶1 Cor 7:12, 13, 18 (twice).

²⁷Matt 9:30; Luke 22:42; John 10:37; 19:21; Rom 6:12, 13 (cf. v 14); 1 Cor 14:39; 1 John 2:15 (cf. vs. 16). Three of those listed in the previous footnote also fit here.

²⁸IV.1. Loeb Classical Library, K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1977) 270-73.

sense. Modern Greek preserves the old distinction of μή with present imperative in that it reflects the idea of continuing action, in this case, that of conversation.

Aorist Imperative More Urgent

Perhaps because English does not have a tense called "aorist," students have come to feel that this tense must be something special and have become accustomed to think of it in superlatives. This is not correct. Even the name the Greeks used for this tense indicates its non-special character (ἀ-privative, + ὀρίζω, a verb indicating limits, boundaries; hence unlimited, unbounded, the tense that can be used for anything). When one does not want to call particular attention to continued or repeated action, or to abiding results from a completed action, he would use the aorist. English does have the equivalent to the aorist. In the indicative where time is involved it is the simple past tense, "He did it." In other moods it is the simple verb. For our present consideration it is the simple imperative, "Do it." This is the thrust of what the grammarians are indicating when they call it "point action" or "punctiliar." It does not mean that the action occurred in a single point of time, in a split second, nor that it will not be repeated. It means that the speaker is not pointing to how it happened, he is just saying, "It happened."

This tendency to glamorize the aorist has influenced the way some have described the aorist imperative. It is frequently claimed to be "more urgent."²⁹ Some have called it "preemptory and categorical, . . . [the present is] less pressing, less rude, less ruthless."³⁰

In evaluating these claims, several things need to be considered. First, it is contrary to the basic significance of the aorist to make it special in any way. Second, these terms (i.e., "urgent," "categorical," etc.) do not convey clearly defined distinctions. In what sense is the aorist "more urgent"? This might be understood to mean it carries more force, more authority. Obviously, some commands produce more pressure than others, but the pressure is in the rank, the authority, or the desperation of the speaker, not in the wording of the command. And the aorist is used by kings and by slaves, by God

²⁹H. L. Drumwright, *An Introduction to New Testament Greek* (Nashville: Broadman, 1980) 130, says, "Usually a note of urgency is suggested by aorist imperative." D. Wallace, "Selected Notes on the Syntax of New Testament Greek" (unpublished intermediate Greek syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981) 205-6, repeatedly uses 'urgent': "The stress is on the urgency of the action . . . on the solemnity and urgency of the action . . . 'Make this your top priority.'"

³⁰N. Turner, *Syntax*, 74-75. BDF, 137, and Robert Funk, *Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenistic Greek*. Vol. 2 (Society of Biblical Literature, 1973) 640, also use the term.

speaking both to men and by men, both saints and sinners, speaking to God. Would an aorist command from a slave to a king have more force than a present imperative from God to a believer?

Or, "urgent" might be related to the time issue, to priority; it might be demanding first attention, "right now," or "as soon as possible." Some justification for such a use of the term may be found in the unquestioned fact that the aorist is often occasional, used to answer questions like "What shall I do?" These are usually asked when a decision is pending. But the urgency is in the situation, not in the aorist.

"Categorical" is another term that is not completely clear in this context. What is the difference between a "categorical imperative" and one that is not? A dictionary defines it as meaning unconditional, unqualified, unequivocal: absolute, positive, direct, explicit. "Love one another" is a present tense imperative in the NT, yet all these terms could be used of it except possibly the last.

Third, the study of aorist commands does not warrant these imprecise distinctions. There are 40 examples (45%) where the aorist prohibition was qualified by explanations, reasons, or exceptions; the terms "categorical," or "unequivocal" are therefore inappropriate. In a few examples, time urgency was explicit (Matt 21:19, Acts 16:28, 23:21); it may be present to some degree in many others, but it does not warrant being considered the characteristic distinctive of aorist commands. Rather, 65% were specific, related to a particular occasion, and 35% were general or universal, of such a character that they could have been stated with a present imperative had the speaker wished to emphasize their durative quality, but apparently chose to say simply, "Do not do it."

Subjunctive versus Imperative in Aorist Prohibitions

Though it may seem strange that the aorist subjunctive is used in negative commands or entreaties rather than the imperative mood, it is by far the most common way. Grammarians explain it from historical factors. The imperative was the last of the moods to develop, and it never completely replaced the older ways of expressing command. In aorist prohibitions the Greek language held to the old way, μή with subjunctive. Perhaps a parallel may be seen in English. We use the imperative without the subject in the second person: "go," "do," "be." But in the third person we express command by saying "let him go," "let it be," which is a subjunctive. For example, the first petition in the Lord's prayer is "Hallowed be Thy name." It could be stated in more normal word order, "Thy name be hallowed." Or in normal speech it might be, "Let thy name be hallowed." Is there a difference in meaning? Probably not.

The subjunctive of prohibition is not always used in NT Greek. It occurs 88 times, but the aorist imperative is also used with μή 8 times.³¹ And there seems to be no distinguishable difference in meaning. In Matt 6:3 the aorist imperative is used in parallel with the more common μή with the subjunctive in Matt 6:2. The other 6 occurrences are all found in parallel accounts of one statement of Christ. Interestingly, Luke records this statement twice in his gospel, once using the aorist imperative with μή, in the other the present imperative with μή, clearly indicating that tense is not dealing with different kinds of action, but different ways of looking at action.

Significance of Third Person Imperative

English has no distinct third person imperative, but Greek has. This makes it difficult to translate. We correctly use the periphrastic expression "let him do," but it seems strange to English students to address one person and give a command to a third person. What is expected of the one spoken to? Why is he told instead of the third party? The interrelationships of third person imperatives in the NT³² are classified as follows.

Indirect Command to "You"

Most of the third person imperatives are aimed indirectly at the one addressed and are therefore basically not much different from second person imperatives.

Some part of you. The simplest and most obvious of these has the command addressed to some part or quality of the one spoken to. Matt 5:16 "let your light shine"; 6:10 "Thy will be done"; John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled." These account for 7% of the third person imperatives.

General command including you. The largest group (49%) of these shows an appeal addressed to the one spoken to as part of a general class. It seems clear that those spoken to are considered the ones for whom the command is intended. Matt 11:15, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear;" Mark 8:34, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself;" Rom 14:3, "Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat."

³¹Matt 6:3, 24:17-18 (twice); Mark 13:15-16 (three times); Luke 17:31 (twice). In the light of these examples it is hard to understand a statement found in N. Turner, *Syntax*, 78, "The prohibitive aor. imperative is later than the NT. Horn quotes the first as iii/A.D.," unless he refers only to the second person imperative. All the NT examples are third person.

³²There are 230; 196 are singular, 34 are plural.

Your responsibility with regard to a third party. In this group the sense may be paraphrased by some such expression as “You require that he do something” or “You see to it that he does something.” While the actual doing may be by the third party, the one addressed is being asked to be responsible for its doing: Matt 27:22, “They all said, ‘Let Him be crucified!’” The crowd was not asking permission of Pilate; they were telling him to see to it that it was done. Seventeen percent are classified thus. Some of these are a passive transform of a command that in the active voice would be second person imperative, as in Luke 7:7, “Let my servant be healed” (or “Heal my servant”). Some are quasi-passives, with the verb and a predicate adjective which together seem to form a periphrastic passive verb. Acts 2:14 τοῦτο ὑμῖν γνωστὸν ἔστω / ‘Let this be known to you’ (or ‘know this’). The next phrase is connected by καί and is a regular second person imperative.

Your permission that someone else do something. The term “permission” is also used to include consent or acquiescence. Found mostly in prayers and requests, this group might be closest to the usual sense of the English expression used to translate it, “Let him do something” or “Let something be done.” Matt 26:39, “Let this cup pass from me”; Col 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.” Ten percent can be placed in this group.

Indirect Command to a Third Party

Sometimes the imperative seems actually to be intended for the third party but addressed to the hearer or reader for his instruction. Many of these are threats or warnings, also challenges or invitations. There seems to be no implication that the hearer is to convey the message to the third party, or has any responsibility in the matter. Luke 16:29, “They have Moses. . . . Let them hear them.” Luke 23:35, “Let him save himself.” Jas 5:14, “Let him call for the elders of the church.” Twelve percent of the total belong to this group.

What is Required of a Third Party

Only 3 passages fit in this category: 1 Tim 3:12 (“Let deacons be husbands of only one wife”), Matt 18:17, and 1 Tim 5:4.

Promise or Warning of What Will Be

Occurring usually with the verb γίνομαι or εἶμι, this group (4%) serves as the announcement or prediction that something will happen, as in Matt 15:28, “Be it done for you as you wish,” and Rom 11:9, “Let their table become a snare. . . . Let their eyes be darkened. . . .”

Significance of a Passive Imperative

On the surface there seems to be something strange about a passive imperative, a command addressed to someone who is not the doer of the action but its recipient. The inquirer is told to be baptized, to be saved, whereas he can do neither. A tree is told to "be plucked up and cast into the sea." What is the meaning conveyed by such a statement?

Of all passive imperatives (154 examples in the NT), two categories can be discerned: (1) Some seem to carry the meaning of permit: "allow it to happen," "receive it," "accept it," apparently asking no personal action from the one addressed. In Mark 1:41, Jesus says to a helpless leper, "Be cleansed." (2) Other passive imperatives carry a responsibility for action: "see to it," "get it done," "do what needs to be done to bring it to pass," as in Rom 12:2, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The Holy Spirit, of course, does the transforming (cf. 2 Cor 3:18), but there is the responsibility of renewing the mind.

Out of this study has come another interesting and helpful observation. There are three types of verbs involved in these passive imperatives. (1) Passive deponent verbs occur in the imperative.³³ Passive in form by definition, they are active in sense, so there is nothing strange in the significance of the imperative. (2) Some passive imperatives are simply the passive transform of the active imperative,³⁴ so that they represent only another way of saying what might have been said in the active voice. In Mark 15:13–14 the cry of those who wished to kill Jesus is "Crucify him" in the active voice; in Matt 27:22, 23 it is passive, "Let him be crucified," with no difference in meaning. The demand is addressed to the same person, and the one responsible for doing it is the same in both; only the way of saying it is different. (3) A large number of passive imperatives are of verbs that in the active voice are causative in sense, but in the passive they express the condition or state resulting from that action.³⁵ To explain by illustration, the verb φοβέω in the active voice in the older Greek meant "to frighten, to scare." In the passive it means "to be frightened,

³³There are 21 deponent passive imperatives. The verbs involved are γενηθήτω (8), γενήθητε (1), πορεύθητι (4), δεήθητε (3), δεήθητι (1), ἀποκρίθητε (2), and one each ἐπιμελήθητι, μετεωρίζεσθε, ἔρρωσθε.

³⁴There are 38 which I have so classified: αἴρω and καθαρίζω have three each, βάλλω, θροέομαι, and σταυρόω two each, and 24 others with one each. The list is available, see the asterisked note above.

³⁵I have identified 95 in this group. The list is available, see above. Those occurring more than once are φοβέομαι (28), ἐγείρω (6), μμνήσκω (6), ὑποτάσσω (6), πλανάω (4), χαίρω (3), ἐνδυναμών (2), and ταρασσω (2).

to be scared," or simply "to fear." Strictly speaking, it is not deponent, since the active does occur in Greek; but in effect it is a deponent verb referring to the condition caused by the action involved in the active form of the verb. This is a common phenomenon in Greek verbs, and many of the passive imperatives are of this type. Cf. also, ἐνδυναμῶ: active, "to make strong, to strengthen," passive, "to be strengthened, to receive strength;" πείθω: active, "to persuade," passive, "to be convinced, to be confident." Other verbs of this type shift from a transitive sense in the active to an intransitive sense in the passive. For example, μινύσκω in the active means "to remind" someone of something, in the passive it means "to remember" (i.e., "be reminded"); πλανᾶω in the active is "to lead astray," in the passive it is "to go astray, to be deceived." Since these verbs, like deponents, have active meanings, their passive imperatives pose no problems in translating.

Future Indicative Used as an Imperative

That the future indicative is sometimes used for commands is beyond question, for the usual form of the Ten Commandments in the NT is future indicative. There is nothing strange about this; many languages, including English, have this usage. It simply tells someone what to do by saying, "You will do this." Two questions are under consideration here: (1) How can we identify or distinguish this from other uses of the future? and (2) Is there a difference in meaning between this construction and the imperatival command?

How to Identify Future Indicatives

Of all the future indicatives in the Greek NT (there are 1606), 53 examples can be considered imperatival, with 4 questionable.³⁶ This of course involves personal judgment, and the list may vary from person to person. There is no mechanical way to recognize a command; only the context can indicate it. And that is always an exegetical judgment.

Of the 53 possible instances, 39 (74%) were found in citations from the OT. Eleven were used in citations of the Ten Commandments, although even here there is variety. "Honor your father and mother" is always expressed with the imperative, but the negative commandments are usually expressed with the future indicative (although in Luke 18:20 the aorist imperative is used). The rest of the OT citations vary from the "greatest command" of all (Matt 22:36-39) to the one forbidding the muzzling of an ox (1 Cor 9:9, 1 Tim

³⁶The list is available, see above.

5:18). Two of them probably are to be understood as permissive rather than demanding (Matt 22:24). Two could be considered simple future statements. The 14 possible examples that are not taken from OT citations also range from one that is in parallel construction with the "greatest" commandment (Matt 5:43) to one used by Pilate when he said "See to that yourself!" (Matt 27:4).

Perhaps the nearest to a "rule" that might be deduced is that these future indicatives are nearly all in the second person. There are 39 second singular, 9 second plural; the remaining 5 are third singular, and it is possible to consider all 5 of these to be simple future statements.³⁷ One place where such a rule would be helpful is 1 John 5:16, where the verb αἰτήσῃ should be identified as a simple future statement of what a "brother" will do when he sees another brother in sin (that is, if he is really a brother—it is a test of "life").

The Significant Use of the Future Indicative

While this construction undoubtedly shows the influence of the LXX on the language of the NT, it does not get thereby a quasi-religious or special significance. Jesus used it both in instructing the disciples what to say to some men they met in a village (Matt 21:3, Luke 19:31, 22:11) and to rebuke their ambition for rank (Mark 9:35). A landowner used it to order his servant to cut down an unproductive tree (Luke 13:9). The OT law used it to forbid the use of muzzles on oxen when they were threshing the grain (1 Cor 9:9, 1 Tim 5:18). In the light of these "common" uses, it is surprising to find the claim being made³⁸ that "... the future indicative is used when the speaker wants to give a solemn, universal, or timeless command rather than an urgent, particular, or temporary command... used for commands which are always proper to obey." Such language describes quite well the significance of a present imperative, but not of the future indicative.

What then is the significance of the future indicative when it is used to express a command? It is simply another indication of the enormous flexibility of language, its ability to say the same thing in many different ways. It has no "special" significance.

Other Imperatival Constructions

In addition to the aorist subjunctive in prohibitions and the future indicative, there are "other imperatival constructions," each needing separate treatment. There are three more ways of expressing

³⁷Matt 22:24 (two); Luke 2:23, 19:46; Heb 12:20.

³⁸D. Wallace, "Notes," 204-5.

the imperatival idea that can be dealt with briefly but need to be mentioned. Grammarians have often warned against the terminology sometimes used in saying that something is "used for" something else, as if implying a conscious substitution. Rather, these varied methods of expressing the same or similar concepts are better seen as part of the richness and flexibility of the language.

Imperatival Infinitive

Classical Greek had a true imperatival infinitive use, but there are no examples in the NT that match the classical pattern for this construction, namely that the subject be present in the nominative case. Elsewhere,³⁹ these have been dealt with in an attempt to support the position that the NT examples may all be satisfactorily explained as examples of ellipsis, the infinitive being one of indirect discourse depending upon a verb of speech understood from the context but not expressed.

Imperatival Participle

The situation is much the same here as with the infinitives. Those cases where the participle has been claimed to be imperatival may all be seen as elliptical expressions where an imperative form of the linking verb is to be supplied, thus making the participle a periphrastic imperative.⁴⁰

³⁹See my article, "The Classification of Infinitives: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 6 (1985) 14-15.

⁴⁰See my article, "The Classification of Participles: A Statistical Study" *GTJ* 5 (1984) 173-74. Reference should be made here to a syntactical structure that has inaccurately been called an "imperatival participle." This structure involves the use of an adverbial participle with a main verb that is imperative, thus giving the participle an imperatival sense. Used primarily, if not solely, in the discussion of Matt 28:19, it involves the question whether "go" is a command parallel to "make disciples."

There is nothing unusual about the grammatical structure of this passage; it is a simple adverbial (or circumstantial, as it is termed by some) participle modifying an imperative verb. Such adverbial participles express a wide variety of ideas; time, cause, manner, means, condition, concession, purpose, or any other "attendant circumstance." Which of these possible meanings was intended is always an interpretational choice, based on context. Time is most frequently indicated, next in order of frequency is the last one listed, the catch-all category called "attendant circumstance." This one is usually translated into English by two coordinate verbs connected by "and," as is the case with Matt 28:19 (KJV, NASB, NIV, RSV, etc.).

Does the fact that the main verb is imperative automatically give an imperatival sense to the participle? The answer clearly is no. There are 93 examples of adverbial participles modifying imperative verbs in the NT. As an indication of their varied character the NASB translates them by English participles 18 times (thus preserving the anonymity of the original), by "when" (temporal) 7 times, by "as" (manner) 5 times, by

Imperative "ἵνα Clause"

There are examples where a ἵνα clause seems to express a command; two are frequently cited. Eph 5:33, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβεῖται τὸν ἄνδρα / 'And let the wife see to it that she respect her husband'; 2 Cor 8:7 ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε / 'See that you abound in this grace also'. The translation given here from the NASB demonstrates how easily these may be considered as ellipses of an easily supplied governing imperative verb. There are many other examples of such ellipsis with ἵνα clauses,⁴¹ although these others do not involve an imperative.

The propriety of considering these other imperative constructions to be elliptical should be judged in the light of the fact that Greek uses ellipsis of the verb much more easily than English.

The "Rank Relationship" Involved with an Imperative

One of the goals of this study was to investigate the "rank relationship" between the one using the imperative and the one to whom it is addressed. A coded listing was made identifying the speaker, the one spoken to, and the relative rank or level of authority between the two, for each imperative verb. These were sorted and counted by computer and some results are presented here.⁴²

The persons were identified in specific terms and came under four general categories: (1) God [God, God's word, Holy Spirit, Jesus]; (2) heavenly beings [angels, demons, Satan]; (3) man [men generally, man's self, disciples, apostles, unbelievers]; and (4) things.

"since" or "for" (causal) twice, by "if" (conditional) once, and by the coordinate verbs with "and" more than 50 times. Of these, 36 times the participle is of a "verb of motion" (in order of frequency, πορευθεῖς 12, ἀνάστας 7, ἐγερθεῖς 3, ἔλθων 3, ἄρας 2, ἀπέλθων 2, once each: διάβας, εἰσέλθων, ἐξέλθων, ἐρχόμενος, παρέλθων; in English, "go," "come," "arise" or "rise," "sit down," "take"). Grammarians (Turner, *Syntax*, 154; BDF, 216) speak of this as a pleonastic participle deriving from the Hebrew idiom which often puts both verbs in the imperative. "The aor. ptc. of πορ. is oft. used pleonastically to enliven the narrative . . . in any case the idea of going or traveling is not emphasized" (BAG, 699; cf. similar comment on ἀνάστας, 69).

The reader is referred to two significant journal articles. Robert D. Culver, "What is the Church's Commission? Some Exegetical Issues in Matthew 28:16-20" (*BSac* 125 [1968] 243-53), presents the normal "circumstantial participle" view. Cleon Rogers, "The Great Commission" (*BSac* 130 [1973] 258-67), presents the view that an imperative sense is to be seen from the Hebrew background which often used two imperatives in similar construction. If there is any "imperative" sense in this participle it must come from the Hebrew, not from the Greek. Most have seen the Hebrew idiom as pleonastic, not imperative.

⁴¹Cf. John 1:8, 13:18, 15:25; 1 John 2:19, 37:1. See above.

⁴²Statistics from this study are available, see above.

The rank relationship was stated in three categories: the speaker (1) greater than, (2) less than, or (3) equal to the one spoken to.

As expected, the vast majority (1416 of 1632, 87%) of imperatival statements were spoken by those who were greater in rank and authority than those to whom they spoke. Of these, 1310 are commands and 53 are requests. It is this relative rank that puts the force or pressure upon the hearer to obey, not the imperative itself or its tense.⁴³ However, not all imperatives are from superiors; a significant number (170, or 10%) are spoken by those of lesser rank to their superiors, mostly in requests and prayers (116 instances), but even commands are addressed to superiors (47 instances where men addressed commands to Jesus, whose superior rank they did not recognize). Both commands and requests are addressed to equals (46 instances, 3%).

There is no automatic or mechanical correspondence between relative rank and the imperative mood. The imperative expresses an appeal of will to will, whether it be command or request, "telling" or "asking." Only the context indicates which is intended, sometimes not too distinctly.

CONCLUSION

The exegesis of the imperative mood, like all exegesis, must be usage-oriented. This study has shown that the imperative mood has a wide latitude of possible meanings from which the exegete must choose the one which, in the light of the context, the speaker intended. This study has attempted to deal with many of the NT passages where questions have been raised about the meaning of an imperative verb, and to point to possible answers. It has expressed some warnings against several of the more commonly encountered errors in the exegesis of imperatives. The rich potential of the Greek language provides its user with a most flexible tool for expressing his thought. The exegete, therefore, must exercise considerable discipline in attending to the full range of imperatival usage and in avoiding the errors of popular exegesis. He must resist the temptation to glamorize his translation while at the same time taking care to maximize his use of the contextual clues that will enrich that translation while keeping it faithful to the intent of the writer.

⁴³See above, pp. 45-46.

UNMARRIED "FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM" (MATTHEW 19:12) IN THE EARLY CHURCH

WILLIAM A. HETH

The possibility of remaining unmarried because of the claims and interests of the kingdom of God was clearly a desirable option for many of the early Christians. The practice of celibacy in the early church cannot simply be attributed to the ascetic atmosphere of the day. Both the concepts and terminology of Matt 19:12 stand behind this practice. The ability to remain continent in singleness was considered to be a gift from God, and the one entrusted with that gift was exhorted to remember the Giver of it and not to think that his abilities were found in himself. The single person who feels called to a life of singleness for the sake of serving the Lord more fully may even be thought of as a sign that Christians are living in urgent times: the time between Christ's resurrection and his return.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

To Marry or Not to Marry?

ALTHOUGH the majority of God's expectations are self-evident, a particularly disconcerting scriptural counsel concerns the advantages of remaining unmarried.¹ This option is especially intriguing for

¹"The traditional [Roman Catholic] understanding of commands-counsels might be summarized as follows. Command has as its object a duty, i.e., an unconditional obligation. The fulfilment of such a command is an *opus debitum*; its nonfulfilment is a sin. Counsel is an invitation or suggestion which does not oblige, but leaves the decision up to the one invited (*consilium in optione ponitur ejus cui datur*). The fulfilment here is a work of supererogation and its nonfulfilment is a positive imperfection" (J. W. Glaser, "Commands-Counsels: a Pauline Teaching?" *TS* 31 [1970] 275). Glaser's study focuses on statements made by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7. He argues that 1 Corinthians 7 does not support the traditional commands-counsels teaching, and that it is doubtful that this teaching harmonizes with the major lines of Paul's theology (p. 286). Note in our overview of Paul's statements on singleness and marriage the

two groups: those married Christians who are serious about the role they play in advancing the claims and interests of God's kingdom and, secondly, those Christians still contemplating marriage. The "singleness passages" in the NT lead the former group to struggle with the challenge of being effective disciples while maintaining a strong commitment to the demands of leading a family. For the latter group, these passages present either a personal dilemma or challenge: to marry or not to marry. The single person faces a dilemma because the single and the married state appear to be equally satisfactory lifestyles for the Christian. Not knowing which to choose, the single person, on the one hand, is confronted with the prospect of remaining single in a society—whether inside or outside the church—that considers marriage the norm. On the other hand, the scriptural counsel to remain single, found primarily in 1 Corinthians 7, may contain a challenge: those contemplating marriage² are implicitly urged to view this question not primarily in the light of the "norm," but in the light of the contributions that they can make as Christ's disciples in a world that entangles married men and women in worldly concerns and troubles that could have been avoided had they remained single (cf. 1 Cor 7:28, 32–35).

The Protestant Reaction to Celibacy

The NT passages that advance the option of singleness are the very texts to which the Christian church has appealed from earliest times to encourage celibacy among its ministers (Matt 19:10–12; 1 Cor 7:1–9, 25–40).³ But "celibacy" is a word that makes modern

different words he employs to encourage or command a course of action. See further the study by P. W. Gooch, "Authority and Justification in Theological Ethics: A Study in 1 Corinthians 7," *JRE* 11 (1983) 62–74.

²We could also include here those considering remarriage after the death of or divorce by a spouse. Paul's personal preference for the single state seems to extend to believers who find themselves in these situations as well (cf. 1 Cor 7:8–9, 39–40, 10–11 [when reconciliation is not possible]).

³Cf. E. H. Plumptre and I. G. Smith, "Celibacy," *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (ed. W. Smith and S. Cheetham), 1:323–27; G. Cross, "Celibacy (Christian)," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (ed. J. Hastings), 3:271–75; P. Delhaye, "Celibacy, History of," *NCE*, 3:369–70; B. J. Leonard, "Celibacy as a Christian Lifestyle in the History of the Church," *RevExp* 74 (1977) 21–32. P. Schaff (*History of the Christian Church* [6th ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1892], 2:397) writes that "The old catholic exaggeration of celibacy attached itself to four passages of Scripture, viz. Matt. 19:12; 22:30; 1 Cor. 7:7 sqq.; and Rev. 14:4; but it went far beyond them, and unconsciously admitted influences from foreign modes of thought." Less than adequate interpretations of Luke 14:26–27 (cf. Matt 10:37–38), 18:29 (cf. Matt 19:29; Mark 10:29), and esp. Luke 20:34–36 (cf. Matt 22:29–30; Mark 12:24–25), which played no small role in Marcionite asceticism (cf. D. E. Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity* [NovTSup 28; Leiden: Brill, 1972] 22, 195–219), also resulted in certain unhealthy practices among Christian ascetics.

Protestants uncomfortable. Ever since the Reformation when Martin Luther boldly broke from the Catholic Church, denounced compulsory clerical celibacy as the work of the devil, and abandoned monastic vows for married life, Evangelicals in the Reformed tradition have associated celibacy with unscriptural excess. Did not Roman Catholicism forbid its clergy to marry? Paul told Timothy that forbidding marriage was demonic (1 Tim 4:1-3). And is not celibacy often an unnatural state, productive of grave disorders of the psychological variety, and symptomatic of a self-centeredness that is anti-social?⁴ Though criticisms of the celibate lifestyle could be multiplied, these are sufficient to suggest that Protestants may have yielded to an opposite extreme.

The average Christian has lost the context of the vicious—and probably well-motivated—Protestant attack on Catholic celibacy at the time of the Reformation. These criticisms primarily were made in the face of the Catholic practice of enforced clerical celibacy,⁵ and not on celibacy/singleness as a state in which the Christian might serve his Lord with fewer distractions. Calvin's perspective is found in his summary of Paul's statements about marriage and singleness in 1 Corinthians 7:

The whole discussion amounts to this. (1) Celibacy is preferable to marriage, because it gives us freedom, and, in consequence better opportunity for the service of God. (2) Yet no compulsion should be used to prevent individuals from marrying, if they want to do so. (3) Moreover marriage itself is the remedy which God has provided for our weakness; and everybody who is not blessed with the gift of continency ought to make use of it. Every person of sound judgment will agree with me in saying that the whole of Paul's teaching on marriage is summed up in these three sentences.⁶

⁴Apologists for celibacy as a vocation in life have felt compelled to refute such accusations. See the foreword by T. Worden in L. Legrand, *The Biblical Doctrine of Virginity* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963), ix-x.

⁵"The Reformed tradition, in its criticism of the celibacy that is compulsory for the priesthood in the Western Church, was led without noticing it to consider Christian celibacy as something quite out of the ordinary and decidedly odd" (M. Thurian, *Marriage and Celibacy* [trans. N. Emerton; Studies in Ministry and Worship; London: SCM 1959] 85; cf. Cross, *ERE* 3:275; Leonard, "Celibacy as a Christian Lifestyle," 28). Though the tendency towards clerical celibacy set in very early, the absolute prohibition of clerical marriage did not come in the Western Church until the twelfth century.

⁶J. Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (trans. J. W. Fraser; Calvin's Commentaries; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 167. Calvin is wrong, however, when he states that Paul sees marriage as a remedy against incontinence for the never-before-married. In 1 Cor 7:1-7 Paul is addressing married couples who are abstaining from normal marital relations, as Origen ("Origen on 1 Corinthians," ed. C. Jenkins, *JTS* 9 [1907-8] 500-501) understood long ago. Cf. also Thurian, *Marriage and Celibacy*, 90-91.

By focusing on the negative aspects of celibacy within Catholicism, Protestants have neglected to define how Jesus' saying about "eunuchs" for the kingdom's sake and Paul's counsels to singleness in 1 Corinthians 7 apply to the believer today. One writer remarks that "in Protestantism, where marriage has been more nearly normative for clergy as well as for laymen, little scholarly attention has been given to celibacy or the larger subject of the single person."⁷

Singleness: Problem or Potential?

It is not surprising that evangelical seminaries train their future pastors in the discipline of marriage counseling. Yet scarcely a word is said about counseling someone to remain single, if they are able,⁸ for the express purpose of rendering a more devoted service to the Lord. Both the secular society at large and the Christian church as a whole treat singleness, practically speaking, as something of an accursed condition (to overstate the case). The same seems to have been true in ancient times as well. A Sumerian proverb from ca. 2600 B.C. states: "He that supports no wife, he that supports no son, may his misfortunes be multiplied."⁹ We read in the intertestamental Jewish literature that

He who acquires a wife gets his best possession, a helper fit for him and a pillar of support. Where there is no fence, the property will be plundered; and where there is no wife, a man will wander about and sigh [Sir 36:24-25].

A daughter keeps her father secretly wakeful, and worry over her robs him of sleep; when she is young lest she do not marry, or if married, lest she be hated [divorced]; while a virgin, lest she be defiled or become pregnant in her father's house; or having a husband, lest she prove unfaithful, or, though married, lest she be barren [Sir 42:9-10].¹⁰

In the Talmudic period, at the end of the first century A.D., Rabbi Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus stated that "Anyone who does not engage in

⁷F. Stagg, "Biblical Perspectives on the Single Person," *RevExp* 74 (1977) 5.

⁸We cannot discuss here the question of how a Christian can discover whether or not God has enabled him to live a life of singleness for the sake of the kingdom. On this subject see Thurian, *Marriage and Celibacy*, 86-88, 92-94. L. M. Weber ("Celibacy," in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi* [ed. K. Rahner; New York: Seabury, 1975] 183) believes that "celibacy is probably not one of the charisms which is either there or not, but one of those which may also be striven for, according to the counsel of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 12:31)."

⁹Cf. W. G. Lambert, "Celibacy in the World's Oldest Proverbs," *BASOR* 169 (1963) 63.

¹⁰*RSV (The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* [ed. H. G. May and B. M. Metzger; New York: Oxford, 1965]). Cf. A. Cronbach, "Ethics in Noncanonical Jewish Writings," *IDB*, 2:164.

the propagation of the race is as though he sheds blood" (*b. Yebam. 63b*). Another rabbi said, "Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness" (*b. Yebam. 62b*). The rabbis unanimously taught that it was a duty for every Israelite to marry and have children. There is only one known instance of a celibate rabbi: Ben 'Azzai. Yet even Ben 'Azzai proclaimed the duty to marry as a command.¹¹

Throughout the history of man it has been assumed that one of his foremost duties is to marry, an assumption based largely on the command that men and women "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen 1:28).¹² In the OT the institutions of marriage and the family were extremely important because in that period God used a particular race, the Israelites, as a vehicle for accomplishing his redemptive purpose.¹³ The Messiah was destined to come through the seed of Abraham (Gen 17:8; Gal 3:16) and the line of David (Matt 1:1-16; Luke 1:32-33, 68-70; 2:4; 3:23-38; John 7:42). But the religious importance of physical descent (cf. Rom 9:5, 3*b*) has ended with the coming of Jesus (cf. Gal 3:26-29; 6:15). We have entered a new era in which marriage—though still spoken of as a sacred institution (Matt 19:4-6; Eph 5:22-33; Rev 19:7-9)—is not as decisive for the coming of the Kingdom as it was in the OT. Paul states clearly that marriage belongs to the form of this world that is passing away (1 Cor 7:29-31).¹⁴ Jesus said that in the world to come the institution of marriage would no longer exist (Matt 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36). And though "for the sake of the kingdom" the people of God in the OT married and bore children, a new economy has been inaugurated by the life and words of Jesus Christ: there are Christians who will remain unmarried "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this let him accept it" (Matt 19:12*c-d*).

¹¹Cf. J. Jeremias, "Nochmals: War Paulus Witwer?" *ZNW* 28 (1929) 321-23, esp. p. 323. Also J. Schneider, "εὐνοῦχος," *TDNT* 2 (1964) 767.

¹²*NASB* translation and so throughout unless indicated otherwise.

¹³Note that Isa 56:3-5 prophesies of a time when eunuchs will no longer be excluded (cf. Deut 23:1) from God's kingdom blessings. The eunuch in this passage calls himself "a dry tree" (v 3), because everyone in Israel would complain that he is not able to contribute offspring to the community of God.

¹⁴In Paul's teaching, Jesus' messianic reign began with his resurrection and exaltation. So the Christian lives in the tension of the *already* of Christ's resurrection (in which the blessings of the age to come are now partly available) and the *not yet* of his parousia (when the fullness of our promised salvation is realized) (cf. G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974] 369-73, 479-94; H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* [trans. J. R. De Witt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 52-53). Thus in this age of the church, singleness for the kingdom's sake could be considered as a prophetic (eschatological) sign, a reminder that the Christian should not become too attached to the things of this world (cf. Thurian, *Marriage and Celibacy*, 112-15).

So in the eyes of Paul, in light of the coming eternal state, and because of the intercalary character of the kingdom in these last days (cf. Heb 1:2), marriage should not be the *only* possibility that Christian leaders set before unmarried believers eager to serve Christ. Goppelt makes a provocative remark about the new state of affairs introduced by the coming of Jesus Christ.

Things do not merely revert back to the first creation [cf. Matt 19:4, 8b]. The kingdom of God brings the consummation as a new creation, and does not simply reinstate the original one. It is for this reason that Jesus summoned people then and there on behalf of the kingdom of God to forsake not only evil, but also the forms of existence bound to the first creation. There are men, e.g., who "become eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven," i.e., they forgo marital union as did Jesus himself (Mt. 19:12).¹⁵

What place does the single person have in the Christian church today? Evangelical Protestants have not answered this question adequately. Little attention has been given to developing a biblical theology of singleness. Evangelicals also have seemingly overlooked a great potential for advancing the cause of Christ in this age, namely, a life free from matrimonial ties. Some may well choose not to marry because the claims and interests of God's kingdom have so captivated their lives (cf. Matt 13:44-46) that they desire to invest their time and energy in that kingdom to the maximum extent possible.

The Purpose of This Study

This study is concerned with certain passages in the NT that seem to counsel a life of singleness for the sake of better serving Christ in this age, and in particular, how these texts were understood and applied by early Christian writers prior to A.D. 220. A brief survey of a number of Paul's statements on singleness and marriage will be presented in an attempt to surface some of the problems they raise. It will become clear that at an early date individual Christians were voluntarily taking up the challenge couched in the words of Jesus in Matt 19:12 to become "eunuchs" because of the claims and interests of God's kingdom. The accuracy of the statement by Baus, found in the first volume of Jedin's superb *History of the Church*, should become evident: "Christians of both sexes who renounced marriage, who dissociated themselves more than others from secular life, yet remained with their families and put themselves at the

¹⁵L. Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. J. E. Alsup; ed. J. Roloff; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981-82), 1:73.

service of the Christian community, are not found for the first time in the third century."¹⁶

PAUL'S STATEMENTS ON SINGLENES AND MARRIAGE

1 Corinthians 7:1-7, 25-28

Some of Paul's remarks about remaining single seem to place the celibate/single person on a higher spiritual plane than the married. Some writers plainly say that Paul thinks of marriage as a "lesser of two evils,"¹⁷ or that celibacy is the ideal condition,¹⁸ and marriage is a concession to man's sinful inability to rise above his lower instincts and realize the ideal.¹⁹ Schillebeeckx claims that "anyone who denies that Paul, deeply concerned as he was for the kingdom of God, did not regard a life of complete abstinence as the ideal state is bound to do violence to these texts."²⁰

Take for example 1 Cor 7:1-2, translated by the *NIV* as follows: "Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband." It appears from this translation that Paul begins with the assumption that singleness is to be preferred over marriage. But if a single person is likely to fall into immorality, what course of action should the Christian take? Many would likely say that in this situation the Christian should avoid immorality (the greater evil) and go ahead and marry (the lesser evil) if he is not able to accomplish the ideal, celibacy.²¹

Consider the contrast between Paul's statement that "it is good for a man not to marry" and God's creation statement, "It is not good for a man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18). Some might ask whether Paul feels that the coming of God's kingdom in the Messiah has somehow affected the normal creation order. (Note the remark by Goppelt above.)

¹⁶K. Baus, *From the Apostolic Community to Constantine* (vol. 1 of *History of the Church*; ed. H. Jedin and J. Dolan; New York: Crossroad, 1982) 295.

¹⁷Cf. E. Stauffer, "γαμέω," *TDNT* 1 (1964) 652; D. L. Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 86. For a good overview of primarily French and German works on Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7 see A. Peters, "St. Paul and Marriage," *African Ecclesiastical Review* 6 (1964) 214-24.

¹⁸Cf. Legrand, *Virginity*, 98; C. H. Giblin, "1 Corinthians 7—A Negative Theology of Marriage and Celibacy?" *TBT* 41 (1969) 2839-55.

¹⁹Cf. D. Daube, "Concessions to Sinfulness in Jewish Law," *JJS* 10 (1959) 11-12.

²⁰E. Schillebeeckx, *Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery* (trans. N. D. Smith; 2 vols. in 1; New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965) 130.

²¹For a proper understanding of 1 Cor 7:1-7 see V. P. Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) 30-39; and G. D. Fee, "1 Corinthians 7:1 in the *NIV*," *JETS* 23 (1980) 307-14.

Then after Paul encourages those who are married to render to one another full conjugal rights (1 Cor 7:3–5), another problem arises. He adds that what he says is “by way of concession (κατὰ συγγνώμην), not of command (κατ’ ἐπιταγήν)” (7:6). What is Paul conceding here? Some believe that he is conceding sexual relations to the married person who lacks self-control—that is, who ideally should abstain from marital relations—as Jerome believed.²² That some married Christians were encouraged to remain continent or exercise self-control (ἡ ἐγκράτεια) to the extent that they lived together with their wives as sisters is found as early as the *Shepherd of Hermas* (ca. A.D. 90–140).²³ And what does Paul mean when he sums up his remarks in 1 Cor 7:1–7 by adding that he wishes (θέλω) that all men could remain single or continent like himself (v 7)? Yet he recognizes that each man is given a different gift or ability by God.

Though Paul has much to say about the practical benefits of remaining single, he states in 1 Cor 7:25 that he has no “command” or “disposition” (ἐπιταγή) from the Lord on this subject. Since Paul has already appealed to the Lord’s command not to separate or divorce (vv 10–11), commentators appropriately ask why Paul did not, if he knew of the Lord’s saying in Matt 19:12, allude to it here in support of his apparent preference for the single state. One answer to this question is given by Balducelli:

The grammar of the text [Matt 19:12] is declaratory (“there are eunuchs . . .”), not exhortatory or prescriptive. And the parting words, “Let anyone accept this who can” (v. 12d), which are exhortatory, are

²²Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* 1.7 (NPNF, 2nd series, 6:352). Cf. Schillebeeckx, *Marriage*, 126–27; and W. Grundmann, “ἐγκράτεια,” *TDNT* 2 (1964) 342. Furnish (*Moral Teaching*, 36), however, understands Paul better: “In 1 Corinthians 7:5 Paul recognizes that sexual abstinence may have a place within marriage, but only under three conditions: that it be temporary, that it be by mutual agreement, and that it be for prayer. Otherwise, as in the more extreme case of celibate marriages, one may be tempted to seek the fulfillment of one’s sexual desires elsewhere, and that would be immoral. It is probable that this allowance for temporary sexual abstinence within marriage is the ‘concession’ (RSV) of which the Apostle speaks in verse 6, even though many have taken that as a reference to marriage itself.”

²³I believe a reading of the following passages in *Hermas* should confirm this: *Herm. Vis.* 1.1.1–9; 1.2.4; 2.2.3; 2.3.1; 3.8.4; *Herm. Sim.* 9.2.3; 9.10.7; 9.11.1–8; 9.15.2 (on the twelve virgins), and *Herm. Sim.* 9.9.5; 9.13.8–9; 9.15.3 (on the twelve evil women clothed in black). The women are allegorized in the Similitudes and represent key virtues and vices. Note that the names of the second virgin (Ἐγκράτεια, cf. *Vis.* 3.8.4) and the second woman clothed in black (Ἀκρασία) are subjects Paul discusses in 1 Cor 7:5, 9. When we consider that Hermas is told that he will live with his wife as a sister (*Herm. Vis.* 2.2.3; cf. 2.3.1), it looks very much like the faithful, temperate Hermas is being told to abstain from marital relations. On the date of *Hermas* see J. Quasten, *Patrology* (3 vols.; Westminster, MD: Newman, 1950–60), 1:92–93. J. A. T. Robinson (*Redating the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976] 319–22) would date Hermas ca. A.D. 85 at the latest.

not an exhortation to accept celibacy but to "accept" what has been said about it ("this"), namely, that it has happened. This explains why Paul, who so outspokenly promotes his own appreciation of celibacy (1 Cor 7:1, 7-8), is not in a position to canonize that appreciation by tracing it back to a direct endorsement ("disposition") of the Lord (1 Cor 7:25).²⁴

Nevertheless, if Paul knew of a saying of the Lord similar to that contained in Matt 19:12, one may ask why he did not say "I have no command from the Lord, but I do have his counsel to all who can take it."²⁵ This, of course, assumes that the topic (cf. περὶ δέ, v 25) to which Paul responds in 1 Cor 7:25-38 concerns single men (vv 27-28a, 32-34a) and women (vv 28b, 34b) who are questioning whether they should marry.

Paul proceeds to say that even though getting married is not a sin (v 28a; cf. v 36) for these "virgins" (τῶν παρθένων, gen. pl.; v 25), he strongly discourages it "in view of the present distress" (v 26), the shortening of the time (v 29), and because of the simple fact that the married state brings with it cares and concerns for the things of the world (vv 32-34).²⁶ Paul's supreme desire in all of this is brought out in v 35: "And this I say for your own benefit (σύμφωρον);²⁷ not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord." The degree to which Paul's counsels on marriage and singleness are influenced by his eschatological expectations remains to be seen. But whatever he means by "the present distress" (τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην),²⁸ one of Paul's

²⁴R. Balducci, "The Decision for Celibacy," *TS* 36 (1975) 225-26.

²⁵Cf. Q. Quesnell, "'Made Themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven' (Mt 19:12)," *CBQ* 30 (1968) 341, n. 10. In response to Quesnell, if Paul had appealed to a saying of the Lord that suggested refraining from marriage it could have been used by the sexual ascetics in Corinth (cf. J. C. Hurd, Jr., *The Origin of I Corinthians* [new ed.; Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1983] 155-68) to support their extreme practices. 1 Tim 4:1-3 and the Corinthians' position reflected in 1 Corinthians 7 is evidence that those who frowned upon marriage did not wait to make their appearance until the Apostles passed away.

²⁶"It is not that celibacy is a peaceful state in which one lives far from the world's worries; it is just a question of choosing between a life exclusively devoted to the cares of the Christian ministry . . . and a life divided between two sorts of preoccupations, both willed by God, that of the cares of marriage and that of the cares of the Church" (Thurian, *Marriage and Celibacy*, 106-7).

²⁷Stauffer (*TDNT* 1:652, n. 27) believes that Paul himself is conscious of being one of the εὐνοῦχοι διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν (Matt 19:12) and finds the συμφέρει of Matt 19:10 here in 1 Cor 7:35. "It is a technical term for the orientation of ethics to the final goal of calling. Cf. Mt. 5:29 f.; 1 C. 6:12; 10:23; 10:33."

²⁸I am inclined to believe that Paul is simply referring to the "afflictions which derive from the tension between the new creation in Christ and the old cosmos" (W. Grundmann, "ἀνάγκη," *TDNT* 1 [1964] 346), a tension all believers face in the present church age. Cf. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 310-11.

primary reasons for advocating singleness is for the sake of the Lord's work: more can be accomplished by the single person. (Indeed, Christians today often expect their married pastor to do the work of a single person, i.e., as if he did not have the obligations of a married man!) The fact that the time is short (v 29) simply means that the work is urgent. Therefore, remaining single for the sake of the Lord's work is a valid motive for Christians today however one might understand Paul's eschatological perspective.

The problem of whom Paul is addressing in 1 Cor 7:36–38 further complicates the status of the married in Paul's thinking.²⁹ According to traditional exegesis, Paul is giving advice to Christian fathers who are anxious about their unmarried daughters (cf. *NASB, JB*).³⁰ Should they arrange marriages for them or not? Others believe that Paul is describing a kind of spiritual or celibate marriage in which couples live together without having sexual relations.³¹ Moffatt's translation reflects this view:

At the same time if any man considers that he is not behaving properly to the maid who is his spiritual bride, if his passions are strong and if it must be so, then let him do what he wants—let them be married; it is no sin for him. But the man of firm purpose who has made up his mind, who, instead of being forced against his will, has determined to himself to keep his maid a spiritual bride—that man will be doing the right thing. Thus both are right, alike in marrying and in refraining from marriage, but he who does not marry will be found to have done better [cf. *NEB* also].

Still another view has been argued by Ford.³² She offers linguistic evidence³³ to support her contention that *παρθένος* in 1 Cor 7:25–38

²⁹Hurd (*Origin*, 169–81) discusses these verses in detail and provides good bibliographical material for three of the four views mentioned here. The references I give in the next few notes are not found in Hurd.

³⁰Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 3.12.79; LCC 2:76) seems to understand the passage in this way.

³¹Cf. H. Achelis, "Agapētae," *ERE*, 1:179; Thurian, *Marriage and Celibacy*, 73–77; R. H. Seabolt, "Spiritual Marriage in the Early Church: A Suggested Interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:36–38," *CTM* 30 (1959) 103–19, 176–89; G. Dellings, "παρθένος," *TDNT* 5 (1967) 836; Hurd, *Origins*, 169–82.

³²J. M. Ford, "Levirate Marriage in St Paul (1 Cor vii)," *NTS* 10 (1964) 361–65; and "St Paul, the Philogamist (1 Cor. vii in Early Patristic Exegesis)," *NTS* 11 (1965) 326–48. I know of no other writer who champions Ford's position.

³³Ford's ("Levirate Marriage," 363) appeal to the use of the cognate noun in Ign. *Smyrn.* 13:1 is initially convincing. Ignatius concludes his letter by saying: "I salute the families of my brethren with their wives and children, and the maidens who are called widows (καὶ τὰς παρθένους τὰς λεγόμενας χήρας)" (*The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL 1:267). But neither Ford nor C. C. Richardson, whose translation of this text and appended note (LCC 1:116) seem to support Ford's understanding, refer to J. B.

should be translated "widow" and that vv 36–38 discuss the case of a widowed sister-in-law. The Corinthians want to know if they are bound by the Jewish custom of levirate marriage.³⁴ Finally, the view recently argued by Baumert is that the whole of vv 25–38 refers to engaged couples (cf. *RSV, NIV*).³⁵ The question the engaged men are asking Paul (most likely because they have come under the influence

Lightfoot's extensive discussion of this problem (*The Apostolic Fathers* [Part II, 2: *S. Ignatius S. Polycarp*; London: n.p. 1889; reprint; Hildesheim/New York: Georg Olms, 1973] 322–24). The texts that Lightfoot cites in support of his interpretation of Ign. Smyrn. 13:1 ("I salute those women whom, though by name and in outward condition they are widows, I prefer to call virgins, for such they are in God's sight by their purity and devotion") show that the self-control associated with the literal state of virginity finds expression in other states. Virginity or celibacy has long been associated with the graced-ability to remain continent in the sexual area (cf. Paul in 1 Cor 7:1–9), and now other states (continency within marriage and in widowhood) are likened to the literal condition of virginity. "Virgin" and "virginity" can be used figuratively in Scripture (cf. 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 14:4). One passage from Clement's *Stromata* (3.16.101; LCC 2:88) will help to illustrate these ideas: "There are also some now who rank the widow higher than the virgin in the matter of continence (ἐγκράτειαν), on the ground that she scorns pleasure of which she has had experience."

³⁴Tertullian (*To His Wife* 1.7; ACW 13:20) does understand 1 Cor 7:28 to say that a widow does not sin in remarrying even though there is no explicit reference to widows in this text. Ford devotes 11 of nearly 23 pages in her article ("St Paul, the Philogamist," 331–42) to Tertullian's works and the possible Jewish background of Montanism, which he later adopted. Though Tertullian could be cited in favor of the father-daughter view of 1 Cor 7:36–38, Ford thinks his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 7 is inconclusive and that what he does say lends credence to her understanding that 1 Cor 7:25–38 concerns widows, and in particular, the question of levirate marriage. But Ford should probably not press too far Tertullian's use of this passage in support of her levirate marriage view. What Paul says in 1 Cor 7:25–35 *could* be applied to the situation of a widow who is completely free from matrimonial ties. Tertullian's own principle of interpretation is that "No enunciation of the Holy Spirit ought to be (confined) to the subject immediately in hand merely, and not applied and carried out with a view to every occasion to which its application is useful" (*On the Apparel of Women* 2.2.5 [ANF 4:19; cf. FC 40:132]).

³⁵N. Baumert, *Ehelosigkeit und Ehe im Herrn: Eine Neuinterpretation von 1 Kor 7* (Forschung zur Biebel; Würzburg: Echter, 1984) 161–310. Cf. W. F. Beck, "1 Corinthians 7:36–38," *CTM* 25 (1954) 370–72; C. S. C. Williams, "I and II Corinthians," *PCB* §834e; G. Schrenk, "θελῆμα," *TDNT* 3 (1965) 60–61; J. K. Elliott, "Paul's Teaching on Marriage in 1 Corinthians: Some Problems Considered," *NTS* 19 (1973) 219–25; and D. E. Garland, "The Christian's Posture Toward Marriage and Celibacy: 1 Corinthians 7," *RevExp* 80 (1983) 351–62. A fifth view is defended, unsuccessfully in my opinion, by J. F. Bound ("Who Are the 'Virgins' Discussed in 1 Corinthians 7:25–38?" *Evangelical Journal* 2 [1984] 3–15). Vv 25–28 and vv 36–38 are talking about "male virgins," and in vv 36–38 the issue is whether they are able to control their own sexual passions and keep their condition of "virginity" (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένοιον). Early support for this allegorical interpretation of a man keeping his own "flesh virgin" is found in Methodius of Olympus (ca. A.D. 270), *The Symposium: A Treatise on Virginity* 3.14 (ANF 6:322–23; ACW 27:73–74).

of the ascetic teaching current in Corinth) is whether or not they should fulfill their promise of marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:8–9, 39–40 and 1 Timothy 5:14

As if the status of the married were not complicated enough, Paul takes up the issue of the remarriage of widows (and widowers). Paul's closing comments in 1 Corinthians appear to be an afterthought to 7:8–9, a passage in which Paul gives directions to widowers³⁶ and widows who cannot control their sexual desires: they may marry again. In 1 Cor 7:39–40 Paul adds a final counsel that the widow, whom he permits to remarry, would in his opinion (γνώμη; cf. v 25) be happier if she remained in a state of singleness. Yet in another context (1 Tim 5:14) Paul says that he wants (βούλομαι) younger widows to get married, bear children, and keep house.³⁷ Here Paul seems to say the exact opposite of his clearly stated preference in 1 Cor 7:40 that widows would do better not to marry again. Does Paul's preference for the single state extend even to widows and widowers?

Scholars like Dibelius and Conzelmann, who are convinced that the Pastoral Epistles are deutero-Pauline documents, offer one solution to this apparent inconsistency: Paul's attitude in 1 Corinthians 7 is eschatologically determined and is completely different from the point of view in 1 Timothy 5. There "the world is expected to endure, and taking root in it is desirable."³⁸ This, of course, is not an acceptable option for those who accept the Pastorals as Paul's letters and assume that Paul maintained a consistent eschatological viewpoint throughout his ministry.

On the other hand, the 1 Tim 5:14 passage is often cited by Evangelicals to show that Paul happily permits second marriages after the death of a spouse (despite his judgment to the contrary in 1 Cor 7:40), thereby distancing him from the early fathers like Hermas and Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215)³⁹ who discouraged second mar-

³⁶The fact that ἄγαμος is masculine in v 8 and linked with "widows," that neither the LXX or the NT use the Greek term for "widower," and that Paul does not discuss the never-before-married until v 25, suggests that τοῖς ἀγάμοις should be translated "widowers," and γαμέω in v 9 means "marry again." Ἀγαμος ("unmarried, single, prop. of the man, whether bachelor or widower," *LSJ* 5) is a fluid term for Paul (1 Cor 7:8, 11, 32, 34) and must be contextually defined.

³⁷R. Kugelman ("The First Letter to the Corinthians," *JBC* 2:266) states that Paul's advice in 1 Cor 7:40 "does not contradict 1 Tim 5:14, which treats of young widows of unstable continency."

³⁸M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 76.

³⁹*Stromata* 3.12.82 (LCC 2:78–79). Clement notes that the death of a spouse may indicate God's purpose for an individual "by which he has become free from distraction for the service of the Lord."

riages but did not call them sinful. Hermas writes in Mandate 4.4.1–2:

Once more I spoke and asked him: "Sir, since you have borne with me once, make this also clear to me." "What is it?" he said. "Sir," I said, "if a wife or husband is deceased and either one of the survivors marries again, does he or she sin by remarriage?" "There is no sin," he said. "But, anyone who remains single achieves greater honor for himself and great glory before the Lord. But, even in remarriage, there is no sin."⁴⁰

The question that must be asked of the usual evangelical estimate of Paul's attitude toward second marriages is how does it compare with Paul's own words on the subject?

Evangelical commentators who cite 1 Tim 5:14 as evidence of Paul's unqualified approval of second marriages after the death of a spouse have neglected to study the wider context of 1 Timothy 5 where Paul expresses his desire that young widows should remarry. Paul's words in 1 Tim 5:11–12 suggest that (some/all?) young widows made "an express renunciation of second marriage, ratified by a vow"⁴¹ (cf. v 12, ἡ πρώτη πίστις). Paul says that certain frivolous younger widows "set aside" (ἀθέτω) "this pledge" when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ and wish to get married (v 11), thereby "incurring condemnation" (ἐχουσαι κρίμα). Kelly observes that the language of v 11 "suggests that Christ is thought of as a spiritual bridegroom (cf. 2 Cor xi. 2). Hence the desire to marry again, natural enough in young women who have lost their husbands, is in effect an act of unfaithfulness to him."⁴²

In addition to Paul's negative estimation of such sensual desires, he says that these young widows become gossips and busybodies, going from house to house (their duty as congregational widows?).⁴³

⁴⁰FC 1:265. This is not the only place where Hermas seems to encourage works of supererogation (cf. *Herm. Sim.* 5.2.7; 5.3.3, 8).

⁴¹G. Stählin, "χήρα," *TDNT* 9 (1974) 454 and nn. 136–37. Cf. S. Solle, "χήρα," *NIDNTT* 3 (1978) 1075.

⁴²J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (N.p.: 1963; reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 117. Cf. C. J. Ellicott, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (2nd ed.; Boston: Draper and Halliday, 1861; reprint; Minneapolis: James Family, 1978) 88–89; A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 98–99. W. Hendriksen (*Exposition of The Pastoral Epistles* [NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979] 176) believes the pledge the young widows made was "to the church, namely, to continue in the work of the Lord." But Kelly's interpretation is more probable.

⁴³Cf. Stählin, *TDNT* 9:456–57; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 75; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 118. A. Oepke ("γυνή," *TDNT* 1 [1964] 788), however, does not believe that the "house to house" remark in v 13 is a reference to pastoral visitation duties performed by the qualifying members of this group. C. C. Ryrie (*The Role of Women in the Church* [N.p., 1958; reprint; Chicago: Moody, 1970] 83–84) discusses

This is the point at which Paul says that younger widows should marry (v 14a). The result of this course of action is that the enemy will be given no occasion for reproach (v 14b; cf. 1 Tim 3:7). Thus the context of Paul's recommendation that young widows should marry again hardly seems to support the contemporary evangelical opinion (often supported by an indiscriminate appeal to 1 Tim 5:14) that Paul happily approves the remarriage of widow or widower.⁴⁴ Various commentators have stated that the principle of the lesser of two evils lurks in the background, namely in the motive provided in v 14b: "give the enemy no occasion for reproach."⁴⁵

Some Final Remarks

This has been but a cursory survey of Paul's remarks on marriage and singleness, touching on his attitude toward remarriage after the death of a spouse. It is possible that Paul's personal preference for the single state extends even to someone who was once married.⁴⁶ This subject arises repeatedly in the writings of the fathers and the councils in the early Christian centuries. Half of Tertullian's treatise *To His Wife* (*Ad Uxorem*; ca. A.D. 200–206) is devoted to expound-

the question of what ministry widows may have had and comes to no definite conclusion outside of what Paul says about them in v 5. Ryrie also examines the role of widows in the church in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. See his index (p. 151) under "Widows." To it should be added Polycarp, 100.

⁴⁴We must remember that Paul, in 1 Timothy 5, is not discussing the remarriage of any young widow, but only of those in this group who have made a pledge to Christ not to marry again (so that they can serve their Lord to the fullest extent possible as Paul mentions in 1 Cor 7:28b–35?). Paul's attitude toward the remarriage of any widow, young or old, ought to be determined by specific statements and principles gleaned from 1 Corinthians 7.

⁴⁵Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:652. It appears that Paul's personal preference is that it is better for anyone whose partner has died to avoid a second marriage. But Paul's good sense and realism make him encourage second marriages where the strain (1 Cor 7:8–9) or dangers (1 Tim 5:14) involved in remaining single would be too great.

⁴⁶Paul also requires the elder (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6) and the deacon (1 Tim 3:12) to be "the husband of one wife," and the widow who is put on the official list must have been "the wife of one man" (1 Tim 5:9; cf. Luke 2:36–37; see also Jdt 16:22–23). In the first century this may well have excluded from these particular positions those who remarried after the death of their spouses (cf. Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 75–76, 115–16; C. Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales* [Études Bibliques; 4th ed. rev.; 2 vols.; Paris, 1969], 1:430–31; Stählin, *TDNT* 9:442, 450–51, 457; B. Vawter, "Divorce and the New Testament," *CBQ* 39 [1977] 529, 537–38; and BAGD, "εἷς," 2b; most of the older commentaries). Against this view and for the understanding that divorcees who have remarried are in view, see Oepke, *TDNT* 1:362–63, n. 11, p. 788; J. D. M. Derrett, *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970) 374–75; C. Brown, "ἀνὴρ," *NIDNTT* 2 (1976) 563–64; and Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77–78. The view presented by R. L. Saucy ("The Husband of One Wife," *BSac* 131 [1974] 229–40) could scarcely have been Paul's intention.

ing the various reasons why he urges his wife to remain a widow should he die before her.

Before leaving Paul's statements on singleness and marriage it seems appropriate to mention the exegetical consensus that the Corinthians to whom Paul responds in chap. 7 are sexual ascetics who consider their practice mandatory for the Christian life. Whether an over-realized eschatological dualism (cf. 1 Cor 4:8; 2 Tim 2:18), or a gnostic dualism, or a combination of the two lies behind the Corinthian position is still being debated.⁴⁷ At any rate, the Corinthian position seems to have led to two different sets of moral implications. On the one hand were the libertines, the licentious group that Paul corrects in 1 Cor 6:12–20 and whose maxim was "All things are lawful" (6:12; 10:23). On the other hand were the sexual ascetics who denied that sexual relations, and consequently marriage, was compatible with the Christian profession at all. Twice in chap. 7 Paul must remind those who have been influenced by this group that to marry is not a sin (vv 28, 36). And though in principle he agrees that it is good for a man not to have relations with a woman (7:1*b*), he radically qualifies the Corinthian premise (7:2; cf. 6:12–13) in the light of the practical difficulties the believer still faces in this world. Thus the believer "must take fully into account his situation in the world (vii. 5, 7, 13, 15, 21, 37), and take whatever course of action enables him to serve God with least distraction (vv. 5, 9, 15, 29–35), taking account of his special gifts from God (v. 7)."⁴⁸

This means that in all probability 1 Corinthians 7 is primarily a rehabilitation of the marital union in the eyes of the Corinthian ascetics. If Chadwick overstates his case that Paul stands with the ascetics and deprecates marriage (because he dislikes fornication more!),⁴⁹ at least Chadwick has hit upon the basic thrust of Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians 7:

Paul's aim is to minimize the gulf between himself and the Corinthians, and therefore says nothing directly to challenge their principles. He lays himself open to some misunderstanding by not doing so, and from

⁴⁷Cf. D. R. Cartlidge, "1 Corinthians 7 as a Foundation for a Christian Sex Ethic," *JR* 55 (1975) 220–34; A. C. Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24 (1978) 510–26; Fee, "1 Corinthians 7:1," 312–14; and the commentaries, of course.

⁴⁸Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 519.

⁴⁹H. Chadwick ("All Things to All Men," (1 Cor. ix.22)," *NTS* 1 [1954–55] 261–75) discusses Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7 (pp. 263–70), which he thinks illustrates Paul's apologetic technique in dealing with particular situations. Chadwick's estimate of Paul's view of marriage is flawed because he reads vv 1–7 incorrectly (cf. nn. 6, 21–22 above). Paul does not advise people to get married in order to avoid fornication in vv 1–2; but in our view of vv 36–38 he does advise a young engaged man to marry his betrothed if he is not able to channel properly his sexual desire for her

the second century onwards Christian writers (and others) have understood him to be deeply concerned with the superiority of the ascetic ideal and to be directly propagating it in I Cor. vii. When his words are set in their historical context and related to the specific situation, it is clear that the thrust of the chapter is in the reverse direction.⁵⁰

SOME EARLY FATHERS ON SINGLENESSE FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM

Introduction

The early church fathers' exegesis and application of Scripture is not somehow more authoritative or more accurate than that which we find in modern literature. However, they should be given the careful attention deserved by any writer who seeks to speak to or for the church of his day. The earliest Christians did not see the NT texts that deal with singleness through the glasses worn by most Protestants today—glasses tinted with a post-Reformation overreaction to enforced clerical celibacy.⁵¹ If an earlier era of the church has derived more from these texts for their faith and practice than the texts actually teach, the Protestant era has not yet mined them for what they are worth. We often lack a knowledge of the practices and customs of the early churches (cf. I Cor 11:2, 16)⁵² as well as access to a living oral tradition. Papias, who wrote five books,⁵³ states that he often questioned those who had followed the apostles, as well as

before marriage (cf. *RSV*; Schrenk, *TDNT* 3:60–61; and Chadwick, “‘All Things,’” 267–68).

⁵⁰Chadwick, “‘All Things,’” 270.

⁵¹The early church fathers, of course, wore their glasses tinted with a different shade. Many factors contributed to a growing concern about asceticism in the ante-Nicene church which resulted in an over-estimation of celibacy, a depreciation of sexual relations within marriage, and the belief that marriage is only for the purpose of procreation and not the pleasure of the marriage partners (cf. Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 29.1; Athenagoras, *Plea for the Christians* 33; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.6.46; 3.7.58; 3.11.71; 3.12.79). This last view was commonly held by the Stoics (cf. n. 286 by Le Saint in ACW 23:164 for the Stoic references). Schaff (*History*, 2:386) makes the interesting observation that the ante-Nicene excesses of asceticism should not “blind us against the moral heroism of renouncing rights and enjoyments innocent in themselves, but so generally abused and poisoned [in society], that total abstinence seemed to most of the early fathers the only radical and effective cure. So in our days some of the best of men regard total abstinence rather than temperance, the remedy of the fearful evils of intemperance.”

⁵²For example, see Justin's description of early Christian worship in his *First Apology* 65–67 or the instructions in the *Didache*.

⁵³Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεως (Eusebius, *Ecl. Hist.* 3.39.1). For a defense of the translation “Gospels” here see: G. Salmon, “Papias,” *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines* (ed. W. Smith and H. Wace; 4 vols.; 1877), 4:187; and G. Kittel, “λόγιον,” *TDNT* 4 (1967) 139–41.

Aristion (another disciple of the Lord; cf. Luke 10:1) and the Apostle John.⁵⁴ The fact that Papias was a contemporary of the apostle John, and that the first three writers we will look at were contemporaries of Papias, makes our study all the more interesting. Yet the proximity of the earliest Christian writings to the time of the NT—though we can never accord them the authority of the NT—makes reading them more than a curiosity.

Modern commentators almost unanimously have understood some kind of relationship between Jesus' saying about eunuchs in Matt 19:12 and Paul's statement in 1 Cor 7:7 that continency in singleness was given to him (and others) as a gift (χάρισμα) from God.⁵⁵ We want to examine how these two texts, and any pertinent material in their wider contexts, began to influence the lives of early Christians, for better or for worse, and what this can teach us about how these texts should be interpreted and applied today.

*Two Apostolic Fathers*⁵⁶

Clement of Rome

The first text we will look at is found in Clement's letter to the Corinthians. Clement is a good beginning point because his is the earliest extant Christian writing that is not part of the NT, the date of which is quite certain (ca. A.D. 96). The letter was well known and highly regarded in the early church. It was even being read along with the Scriptures in the church's worship service at Corinth in A.D. 170.⁵⁷ The letter is written in the name of the church in Rome in order to deal with a factional dispute in Corinth wherein some of the younger members of the church had ousted certain presbyters from the ministry. Clement uses this situation as an opportunity to impart not a little exhortation to pursue Christian virtues.

⁵⁴Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.39.3–4. For this understanding of the passage, as opposed to the one that says Papias is twice removed from those closest to the Lord, see: C. S. Petrie, "The Authorship of 'The Gospel according to Matthew': A Reconsideration of the External Evidence," *NTS* 14 (1967–68) 15–33; and R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 611–16.

⁵⁵Cf. A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1915) 275; Stauffer, *TDNT*, 1:652; H. B. Green, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (NCB; Oxford: University Press, 1975) 169; N. J. Oppewall, "Celibacy," *ISBE: Fully Revised* (ed. G. W. Bromiley), 1:627; O. G. Oliver, Jr., "Celibacy," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. W. A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 203.

⁵⁶The Greek text used for the Apostolic Fathers is the one by K. Bihlmeyer, *Die Apostolischen Väter* (SAQ; Zweite Reihe; Erstes Heft; Erster Teil; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1970).

⁵⁷Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, 4.23.11.

The reference most pertinent to the issue of singleness is found in *1 Clement* 37–38, and it communicates the same point that Paul does in *1 Corinthians* 12. Clement exhorts the Corinthians to let their whole body be preserved in Christ Jesus, and tells them that each one should be subject to his neighbor (cf. Eph 5:21) according to the special gift that God has bestowed upon him (καθὼς ἐτέθη ἐν τῷ χαρίσματι αὐτοῦ) (38:1).⁵⁸ The strong must take care of the weak, and the weak should respect the strong. The rich man should help the poor, and the poor man should thank God that He has given him someone to meet his needs. The wise man should show his wisdom not in words but in deeds, and the humble should not draw attention to his own good deeds but should let others mention them. Lastly, Clement says that “He who is continent must not put on airs. He must recognize that his self-control is a gift from another.”⁵⁹ Or, to translate this last sentence in *1 Clem.* 38:2 more literally: “Let not the one who is pure in the flesh (ὁ ἄγνός ἐν τῇ σαρκί) grow proud, since he knows (γινώσκων = causal ptc.) that *another* (i.e., God), is the One who grants continence to him (ὅτι ἑτερός ἐστὶν ὁ ἐπιχορηγῶν αὐτῷ τὴν ἐγκράτειαν).”

To whom is Clement referring when he includes this exhortation to those who are “pure in the flesh”? It initially appears that nothing clear is said about the sphere in which these individuals exercise “self-control” (Latin, *continentia*). Paul uses the verbal form of this word (ἐγκρατεύομαι) in *1 Cor* 9:25 where he talks about the athlete who “exercises self-control” to achieve his goals. Also, in addition to speaking to Felix and Drusilla about faith in Christ Jesus, Paul discussed righteousness, self-control (ἐγκρατείας), and the judgment to come—topics that caused Felix’s interest in Christianity to wane (*Acts* 24:25). Self-control, as Clement of Alexandria later says, is something that applies to other matters besides sexual abstinence.⁶⁰

What is clear is that Clement is aware of the danger that the one who possesses this self-control may be tempted to think that he stands on a level above the average Christian. Clement has to remind these Christians that what they are able to do, they are able to do by God’s grace.⁶¹

⁵⁸D. A. Hagner (*The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome* [NovTSup 34; Leiden: Brill, 1973] 197–98, 245) argues that this phrase may be derived from *1 Pet* 4:10; *1 Cor* 7:7; or *Rom* 12:6 (cf. *1 Cor* 12:4).

⁵⁹Trans. by C. C. Richardson (LCC 1:61).

⁶⁰Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.1.4.

⁶¹Cf. Hagner, *Old and NT in Clement of Rome*, 209, 212. Clement says elsewhere that “continence in holiness” (ἐγκράτεια ἐν ἁγιασμῷ) is one of the gifts (τὰ δῶρα) of God (*35:1–2*; cf. *30:3*; *64:1*).

The question remains: who are the ones who are "pure in the flesh"? Clement, by this phrase, *does* seem to indicate that the sphere in which this "self-control" or "continency" is exercised is "in the flesh." But in what sense is the flesh kept pure? Two passages come to mind. The first is Rev 14:4, which suggests the antithesis of "pure in the flesh," namely "defiled" in the flesh. In this passage the 144,000 who are standing with the lamb on Mount Zion are described as "the ones who have not been defiled (μολύνω) with women." The explanation given for this is "for they are virgins (παρθένοι, masc.)." Possibly the men described here are men who have never committed immorality, but is it likely that none of the 144,000 were married? If any were married, the word "defile" could scarcely have been used to describe the relations that godly men have with their wives. There are other interpretive options for this verse that we cannot discuss here,⁶² so it seems best to leave Rev 14:4 out of our consideration of *1 Clem.* 38:2.

The other passage that comes to mind is 1 Cor 6:12–20. Here Paul teaches that the Christian's body is a member of Christ, and that he must glorify God in his body. Christians who continue to take part in immoral pagan sexual practices not only defile themselves (v 18), but they sin against Christ because they are members of his "body." It is true that the word Paul emphasizes in 1 Cor 6:12–20 is "body" (σῶμα) and not "flesh" (σάρξ), as in Clement, but we must remember v 16: "Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body (σῶμα) with her? For he says, 'The two shall become one flesh (σάρκα).'"⁶³ Thus the one who is "pure in the flesh" appears to denote someone who exercises self-control in sexual matters.⁶⁴

⁶²For an overview of the various options, see J. M. Ford, *Revelation* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975) 234–35, 241–46; R. M. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 269–70. Ford once believed that the masculine παρθένοι in Rev 14:4 "may refer to men who have only been married once" ("The Meaning of 'Virgin,'" *NTS* 12 [1965–66] 294). Παρθένος should be understood figuratively in Rev 14:4 (cf. Delling, *TDNT*, 5:836; and F. Hauck, "μολύνω," *TDNT* 4 [1967] 736–37) of those who "have kept themselves pure from all defiling relationships with the pagan world system. They have resisted the seductions of the great harlot Rome with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication (17:2)" (Mounce, 270). Ign. *Smyrn.* 13:1 (see n. 33 above) employs παρθένος figuratively with reference to one's sexual self-control.

⁶³Cf. E. Schweizer, "σάρξ," *TDNT* 7 (1971) 125–26; and R. H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology with an Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (SNTSMS 29; Cambridge: University Press, 1976) 62–64.

⁶⁴Schweizer (*TDNT*, 7:147) says there is no doubt that sexual continence is in view in *1 Clem.* 38:2. We find it most probable that Clement is exhorting those who are continent in singleness and not those who are continent in marriage (cf. Titus 2:4–5; 1 Pet 3:1–2; Pol. *Phil.* 4:2).

Does Clement have a passage of Scripture in mind when he exhorts those who are sexually continent not to take pride in their God-given ability? There are two possibilities. First, Gal 5:23 lists ἐγκράτεια as one of the fruits of the Spirit.⁶⁵ The “Western” text inserts ἀγνεία (“purity, chastity”) after ἐγκράτεια, which may suggest the related word ἀγνός (“pure”) that appears only a few words before ἐγκράτεια in *1 Clem.* 38:2 (cf. 64:1). But the textual evidence for this reading is weak.

The other passage that Clement may have in mind is 1 Cor 7:7: “Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.” Remember that Clement is writing to the church in Corinth which most likely would have preserved copies of Paul’s letters to them. Clement even names Paul as the author of the First Epistle to the Corinthians and tells his readers to refer to this letter that the Corinthian church had received only forty years earlier.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Clement has just used imagery from 1 Corinthians 12 in *1 Clement* 37, and he begins chap. 38 by exhorting his readers to be subject to their fellow-Christians according to the “gift” (χάρισμα) given to each individual. It is important to note that 1 Cor 7:7 is the only passage in the NT that teaches that the ability to live without fulfilling sexual needs is a “gift” from God.⁶⁷ In light of the fact that an antonym of ἐγκράτεια, namely ἀκρασίαν (“lack of self-control”), appears in 1 Cor 7:5, and that ἐγκρατεύομαι appears in 1 Cor 7:9, the background for Clement’s final exhortation in *1 Clem.* 38:2 must be 1 Cor 7:7. Continency in singleness is a beneficial gift bestowed by God and should not be flaunted as a sign of spiritual superiority.

Ignatius of Antioch⁶⁸

If the preceding analysis of *1 Clem.* 38:2 appears to be somewhat tenuous, the next passage in Ignatius’s letter to Polycarp adds some

⁶⁵R. M. Grant (*The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* [ed. R. M. Grant; New York: Thomas Nelson, 1965] 2:66) thinks Gal 5:23 is the background here. Hagner (*Old and NT in Clement of Rome*, 221–22), I think wisely, does not list this possibility.

⁶⁶Cf. Hagner, *Old and NT in Clement of Rome*, 195–96, 209.

⁶⁷Cf. H. Conzelmann, “χάρισμα,” *TDNT* 9 (1974) 404.

⁶⁸According to Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* 3.22; 3.36.1–15 [the second reference gives the account of Ignatius’s journey to Rome as well as Irenaeus’s and Polycarp’s references to Ignatius’s martyrdom]), Ignatius was the second bishop of Syrian Antioch. He wrote seven letters in two stages on his journey through Asia Minor as he was being conducted to Rome as a prisoner. There he would fight and die among the wild beasts in the Coliseum. Nearly all agree that Ignatius was martyred in the latter half of Trajan’s reign (A.D. 98–117).

details that make it most likely that the two texts are referring to the same thing: continence in singleness. The reference in Ignatius not only appears to be an expansion of the one just examined in *1 Clement*, but it may indicate a knowledge of both 1 Cor 7:7 and Matt 19:12. We know that Ignatius reveals a knowledge of several of Paul's letters and that he is probably aware of the contents of *1 Clement*, but Ignatius is clearly most familiar with 1 Corinthians.⁶⁹ We should also remember that Ignatius is the first writer to quote from Matthew's Gospel.⁷⁰ Finally, a link between Ignatius and Matthew and between Matthew and Paul is further suggested by the fact that Paul was a missionary delegate from the church of Antioch (Acts 13:1–3; cf. 11:19–30). Since many believe that Syrian Antioch is the most likely destination for Matthew's Gospel,⁷¹ "we may suppose that this was primarily the tradition of the 'words of the Lord' which he [Paul] took with him, and it would explain the otherwise rather unexpected affinity in doctrine and in discipline between Paul and Matthew."⁷²

Ignatius teaches that Christian wives are to love the Lord and to be content with their husbands in flesh and in spirit and that Christian husbands are to love their wives as the Lord loves the church. He continues:

If anyone is able to remain continent (ἐν ἀγνείᾳ μένειν) to the honor of the flesh of the Lord, let him do so without boasting (ἐν ἀκαυχησίᾳ μενέτω). If he boasts he is lost (ἀπώλετο); and if he is more highly esteemed than the bishop/it is made known to anyone but the bishop (καὶ ἂν γνωσθῇ πλεόν/πλὴν τοῦ ἐπισκόπου), he has been corrupted (ἐφθάρται) [Ign. *Pol.* 5:2].

⁶⁹Cf. Richardson, LCC 1:78. Both Grant (*Apostolic Fathers*, 2:5) and B. H. Streeter (*The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* [London: Macmillan, 1936] 490, n. 2) state that Ignatius had read *1 Clement*.

⁷⁰Streeter (*Four Gospels*, 504–7) discusses about fifteen passages in Ignatius's letters that look like reminiscences of Matthew and the significance of Ignatius's use of the words "the Gospel" as if this were a book. Streeter feels that by *the Gospel* Ignatius means Matthew.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 16, 500–528. For a different view (Caesarea), see B. T. Viviano, "Where Was the Gospel According to St. Matthew Written?" *CBQ* 41 (1979) 533–46.

⁷²Robinson, *Redating*, 97. Consider also that Matthew is the Gospel common to the two possible synoptic sources closest to Paul's allusions to the sayings of Jesus in 1 Cor 7:10–11 (Mark 10:11–12 or Matt 19:9) and 1 Cor 9:14 (Matt 10:10//Luke 10:7). Paul also quotes a portion of Gen 2:24 (cf. Matt 19:5//Mark 10:8) in 1 Cor 6:16 just before his discussion of Jesus' divorce saying. This, along with the often cited idea parallel between 1 Cor 7:7 and Matt 19:11–12, and Paul's extended discussion of the values of singleness in 1 Cor 7:25–38, suggests that Paul may have been aware of the tradition behind the whole of Matt 19:3–12. The eunuch-saying, of course, is peculiar to Matthew's Gospel.

The last sentence reflects two different readings of Ignatius's text that are made possible by the two potential subjects of γνῶσθῃ (the person who boasts about his chastity, or the vow of chastity itself) and whether the correct reading is πλέον or πλήν.⁷³ The translation, "if he is more highly esteemed than the bishop," would suggest that a comparison is being made in which a married bishop is viewed unfavorably.⁷⁴ On this understanding those who are practicing a life of chastity think of themselves as superior to the bishop who is presumably a married man. Sloyan, however, believes this interpretation of Ignatius stems from a faulty translation. He claims that the passive of γινώσκω "is never used to signify 'to be esteemed' but always 'to be made known.'"⁷⁵ The alternative translation is defended by Lightfoot: "if it [the continent individual's purpose or vow of chastity] be known beyond the bishop, he has been corrupted." In the same way that Ignatius says persons intending to marry should do so with the bishop's approval (immediately following our text), so single persons who are able to or desire to remain continent in singleness should take the bishop into their counsels, but no one else (cf. Ign. *Magn.* 7:1).⁷⁶

Where do these single persons fit into Ignatius's understanding of the Christian life? The answer to this question is found in Ignatius's definition of discipleship. It is bound up with complete conformity to the life of Jesus.⁷⁷ For Ignatius the *chief* mode of imitating Christ is through suffering. This is why he is so anxious to get to the Roman Coliseum to meet his death. One of the other means of imitating Christ is "chastity" in honor of the Lord's flesh.

Ignatius's wording in Ign. *Pol.* 5:2 suggests that the challenge to a life of chastity can only be accepted by some. "If anyone is able"

⁷³Πλέον means "more, in greater measure, to a greater degree," and the acc. is used here as an adverb with a gen. of comparison (BAGD, s.v. "πολύς," II2c). Πλήν is an adverb used as a conjunction (BAGD, s.v.) meaning "only, nevertheless, however, but" (cf. BDF §449), and is found in Bihlmeyer's (*Die Apostolischen Väter*, 112) apparatus.

⁷⁴So Kleist's trans. in ACW 1:98; Richardson's trans. in LCC 1:119 (but he makes "his chastity" the subject of ἐφθάρται); and C. Cochini, *Origines apostoliques du célibat sacerdotal* (Paris, 1981) 164–65.

⁷⁵G. Sloyan, "Biblical and Patristic Motives for Celibacy of Church Ministers," *Concilium* 8:8 (1972) 23. Sloyan, however, cites no lexical work of his own to substantiate his statement. He relies on the judgment of "J. B. Lightfoot and A. D'Alès as cited in Roger Gryson, *Les origines du célibat ecclésiastique* (Gembloux, 1968), pp. xi and 228" (n. 20).

⁷⁶Lightfoot (*Apostolic Fathers*, II, 2:349) believes that this is the correct interpretation whether one adopts the πλέον (his preference) or the πλήν reading. Cochini (*Origines*, 165), however, raises some interesting points against this interpretation of Ign. *Pol.* 5:2.

⁷⁷Cf. Aune, *Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology*, 150–51.

(εἰ τις δύναται) is similar in wording to Jesus' closing challenge in Matt 19:12: "He who is able (ὁ δυνάμενος) to accept *this* let him accept it." In fact, in one of Ignatius's other letters he omits the portion of Matt 19:12*d* that he probably alludes to here and quotes the phrase "Let him accept it who can" (ὁ χωρῶν χωρεῖτω). In his letter to the Smyrnaeans (6:1) Ignatius makes the statement that judgment will fall upon the glory of the angels and on rulers visible and invisible if they do not believe on the blood of Christ. Then he says: "The one who accepts (this) let him accept (it)." Ignatius applies this phrase from Matt 19:12*d* to a difficult saying or teaching that he does not want his readers to stumble over.⁷⁸ He even prefaces this teaching with "Let no one be misled." Jesus had used this "let him accept it" challenge after he made the declaration that some would forego marital life and sexual relations because of the primacy of God's kingdom. Though in Ign. *Smyrn.* 6:1 Ignatius employs part of Matt 19:12*d* in a context foreign to the one in Matthew's Gospel, it seems to *function* in exactly the same way it does in its original context in Matt 19:10–12: it is an exhortation to fruitful reception of a difficult teaching.⁷⁹

Yet to be discussed is the meaning of the phrase "to the honor of the flesh of the Lord." This may be a reference to the literal earthly life of Jesus in that he himself was a "eunuch for the sake of the kingdom" *par excellence*. The believer who has been gifted to live a single life of service in devotion to his Lord and who does so without boasting is an imitator of Christ to his honor. This phrase may also be understood as a figurative reference (cf. our discussion of 1 Cor 6:12–20 and 1 Clem. 38:2). Lawson writes:

We observe that the Christian's own body is a part of the Body of Christ, so that a discipline which exalts it exalts "the flesh of the Lord." This conveys to us what a vivid and realistic sense the early Christians felt that they were "members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son."⁸⁰

As in Clement's letter, Ign. *Pol.* 5:2 addresses the temptation of the one who has this gift to think more highly of himself than he

⁷⁸Tertullian (*De Fuga in Persecutione* 14.2 [ANF 4:125; FC 40:306]) uses Matt 19:12*d* the same way in still another context.

⁷⁹W. Bauer ("Matth. 19,12 und die alten Christen," in *Neutestamentliche Studien. Georg Heinrici zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* [UNT 6; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, 1914] 235–44) feels that Matt 19:12 does not occur in the Apostolic Fathers. He mentions the Pol. *Smyrn.* 6:1 passage (p. 236) but says that because it is out of context it is not necessary to discuss it in his essay. This is to overlook some key aspects of Ignatius's understanding of Matt 19:12. Bauer does not discuss Ign. *Pol.* 5:2.

⁸⁰J. Lawson, *A Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Macmillan, 1961) 144.

ought to think. When Ignatius says the Christian who boasts about his decision to remain chaste "has been corrupted," he is not necessarily threatening the believer with eternal damnation.⁸¹ A passage from Methodius's *Symposium* aids in understanding Ignatius at this point:

Again, even though a person may persevere in resisting the desires of the senses, if he should take excessive pride in this very ability to control the impulses of the flesh, considering them all as utterly insignificant, he does not honor chastity. Rather does he dishonor it by his arrogance and pride, *purifying the outside of the dish* [cf. Matt 23:25] and the platter, that is, the flesh, the body, while doing harm to his heart by his domineering conceit.⁸²

In other words, Ignatius warns the celibate to beware of the sin of pride. Though there may be some practical advantages in remaining single for the sake of being more fully devoted to the kingdom of God, one cannot speak of any moral superiority in remaining single, "for it is better to be humble without being celibate than to be celibate without being humble."⁸³

Justin Martyr and Athenagoras⁸⁴

The next two passages are neither exhortations to those with the gift of sexual self-control nor interpretations of the primary singleness texts under consideration. Rather they are included as evidence of the fact that at an early date Christian men and women were renouncing marital life because of the various benefits they perceived in a life of singleness.⁸⁵ Both Justin Martyr and Athenagoras appeal to the existence of men and women in the Christian community who

⁸¹BAGD (s.v. "φθείρω," 2c) lists the meaning of φθείρω in Ign. *Pol.* 5:2 as "destroy in the sense 'punish w. eternal destruction.'" As BAGD notes, the parallel with the preceding ἀπόλλυμι might suggest this. But the other references BAGD lists under this meaning (2 Pet 2:12; Jude 10; 1 Cor 3:17b [if the teacher there is an unbeliever]) all have unbelievers as the object of eternal destruction.

⁸²Methodius of Olympus, *Symposium* 11 (trans. H. Musurillo; ACW 27:149–50).

⁸³Thurian, *Marriage and Celibacy*, 81.

⁸⁴The Greek texts used for Justin, Athenagoras and Clement of Alexandria are those reprinted in the series ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ ΠΑΤΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΣΥΓΓΡΑΦΩΝ (Athens). For Athenagoras see also *Athenagoras* (Oxford Early Christian Texts; ed. and trans. Wm. R. Schoedel; Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

⁸⁵We should not overlook the fact that already in NT times Paul saw certain advantages to the unmarried state (1 Cor 7:7, 29–35, 39–40), and if our interpretation of 1 Tim 5:12 is correct, certain women in NT times were dedicating their lives (free from matrimonial ties) exclusively to Christ. For the possible sociological advantages that women might have found by turning to celibacy, see J. M. Bassler, "The Widows' Tale: A Fresh Look at 1 Tim 5:3–16," *JBL* 103 (1984) 23–41.

had remained continent in singleness in order to prove to pagans what a high standard of morality Christians actually held.

In Justin's *First Apology* (ca. A.D. 150) he begins with an appeal to justice and goes on to refute anti-Christian slanders (3–12). He states and briefly refutes three of the principal charges brought against Christians: atheism, immorality and disloyalty. He tries to show his readers (chap. 12) that if men knew that they were going into either eternal punishment or eternal salvation, depending on the character of their actions, then no one would choose vice, but would restrain himself with virtue that he might avoid punishments and receive the good things that come from God. Neither thoughts nor actions can be hidden from God. Justin points out the difference between the laws made by men and *truth*, namely The Word Himself, Jesus. And speaking of Jesus he says, "we know of no ruler more royal or more just than he. . . . So the sensible man will not choose whatever the Word forbids to be chosen."⁸⁶ At the end of chap. 12 Justin says that already he has made his point clear that Christians only seek what is just and true, but he will go on to persuade the lover of truth.

In chap. 13 Justin states that Christians are not godless but honor Jesus in accordance with reason. He asks his readers to give their attention to the mystery of worshiping a crucified man. He then (chap. 14) warns them ahead of time that the demons will try to distort what he says and prevent them from grasping the truth. He begins to give some examples of how the demons "get a hold of all who do not struggle to their utmost for their own salvation—as we do who, after being persuaded by the Word, renounced them [i.e., the demons] and now follow the only begotten God through his Son." First on Justin's list contrasting past sin with present righteousness is this: "Those who once rejoiced in fornication (πορνείαις) now delight in continence (σωφροσύνη) alone" (14.2). Other examples follow, contrasting what Christians used to be with what they now are.

Then Justin makes a transition to chap. 15 by saying that before he makes his defense, that is, gives his demonstration, he thinks it would be fitting to recall some of the teachings of Christ Himself. By doing this, he says, the contrasts he has just listed will not seem to be sophistry. Here chap. 15 begins and the first catena of Jesus' teachings is subsumed under the subject of "continence" (σωφροσύνη), or "self-discipline." Justin writes:

About continence he said this: "Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery in his heart before God" [Matt 5:28]. And: "If your right eye offends you, cut it out; it is better

⁸⁶ *I Apol.* 12.7–8 (trans. E. R. Hardy; LCC 1:248).

for you to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven with one eye than with two to be sent into eternal fire" [Mark 9:47 (Matt 5:29)]. And: "Whoever marries a woman who has been put away from another man commits adultery" [Matt 5:32 (Luke 16:18)]. And: "There are some who were made eunuchs by men, and some who were born eunuchs, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake; only not all [are able to] receive this" [Matt 19:11–12].⁸⁷

And so those who make second marriages according to human law are sinners in the sight of our Teacher,⁸⁸ and those who look on a woman to lust after her. For he condemns not only the man who commits adultery, but the man who desires to commit adultery, since not only our actions but our thoughts are manifest to God. Many men and women now in their sixties and seventies who have been disciples of Christ from childhood have preserved their purity (ἄφθοροι διαμένουσι); and I am proud that I could point to such people in every nation.⁸⁹

Justin says that these particular teachings of Jesus can be grouped under a common theme: σωφροσύνη. In popular usage this word had already acquired a meaning restricted to sexual moderation, and this meaning of "chastity" and a virtuous life in the moral sphere prevailed in the early church.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Justin makes it clear that this self-control has to do with sexual desire in both *thought* and *action*. From the way that Justin connects Jesus' teachings and comments on them, his last remark about those who have preserved their purity might possibly include not only those who have not committed adultery in thought and in action (especially by remarriage after divorce, something permitted by the secular law but prohibited by Jesus), but also those who have made themselves "eunuchs" for the kingdom of heaven's sake. On the other hand, Justin's last comment may specifically refer to Christian men and women devoted to life-long singleness. Elsewhere Justin says "we do not marry except in order to bring up children, or else, renouncing marriage, we live in perfect continence (τέλειον ἐνεκραυόμεθα)."⁹¹ Thus Justin does not

⁸⁷ A. J. Bellinzoni (*The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr* [NovTSup 17; Leiden: Brill, 1967] 57–61, 96–97) feels Justin's source for the four passages he cites here (15.1–4) seems to be a carefully composed gospel harmony of elements from Matthew, Mark and Luke.

⁸⁸ We cannot discuss here Justin's teaching on divorce and remarriage, for which see H. Crouzel, *L'église primitive face au divorce du premier au cinquième siècle* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1971) 53–56.

⁸⁹ *I Apol.* 15.1–6 (LCC 1:250).

⁹⁰ Cf. U. Luck, "σωφροσύνη," *TDNT* 7 (1971) 1100, 1103. This is the same word that Justin had previously used to describe what Christians now pursue instead of "fornications" (*I Apol.* 14.2).

⁹¹ *I Apol.* 29.1 (LCC 1:260).

appear to understand Matt 19:12 in the literal sense of physical castration.⁹² Those who have made themselves "eunuchs" for the kingdom of heaven's sake are those devoted followers of Christ who never married. Athenagoras's testimony a quarter of a century later will make this identification even more clear.

Two points are worthy of mention with respect to the above passage from Justin's *First Apology*. First, by A.D. 150 Justin is able to point to many Christians who have lived a life of continence as disciples of Christ. The fact that many of them were over sixty or seventy years old pushes the existence of this "because-of-the-kingdom" lifestyle back into the first century, even earlier than the texts we examined from Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch.

The second item of note is the manner in which Justin maintains Matthew's association of Jesus' hard saying on divorce and remarriage with the saying about eunuchs that follows. Clement of Alexandria does the same thing in Book 3 of his *Stromata*, but he comments quite specifically on how these two passages fit together (see below).

Athenagoras answers three current charges brought against Christianity in his *Plea for the Christians* (ca. A.D. 177): atheism, incest, and cannibalism. Chaps. 3–30 are devoted to answering the first charge and chaps. 31–36 take up the remaining two. The passage on singleness is found in the middle of Athenagoras's reply to the charge of incest or promiscuity (chaps. 32–34). Athenagoras, like Justin, appeals to the high moral standards of Christians to refute the charges of immorality.

You would, indeed, find many among us, both men and women, who have grown to old age unmarried (ἀγάμους), in the hope of being closer to God. If, then, to remain virgins and eunuchs (τὸ ἐν παρθενίᾳ καὶ ἐν εὐνουχίᾳ μέναι) brings us closer to God, while to indulge in wrong thoughts and passions drives us from him, we have all the more reason to avoid those acts, the very thought of which we flee from.⁹³

⁹²Yet in *I Apol.* 29.2–3 Justin does record the case of a Christian who petitioned the Prefect in Alexandria, asking that a physician be allowed to make him a eunuch. When the request was denied "the young man remained single (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένων), satisfied with [the approval of] his own conscience and that of his fellow believers." Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* 6.8.1–6) tells the story of Origen's over-literal application of Matt 19:12c in his youth and his later attempt to describe to the bishops of the world the monstrous nature of the act he had wrongly carried out. On Origen's literal hermeneutic in his youth see Bauer, "Matth. 19,12," 238. In his later years Origen (*Matt.* 15. 4) defended the figurative interpretation of all three classes of eunuchs in Matt 19:12.

⁹³*Plea for the Christians* 33.2b–3; trans. C. C. Richardson (LCC 1:337). A good study of Athenagoras's life and writings is L. W. Barnard, *Athenagoras: A Study in Second Century Christian Apologetic* (Théologie historique 18; Paris: Beauchesne, 1972).

If this is what Christians really practice, Athenagoras goes on to say, then those who accuse Christians resemble the proverb, "The harlot reproves the chaste (τὴν σώφρονα)." Christians are being castigated for the very things that their accusers are involved in. Those outside the church are the ones who have set up a market for fornication! "Adulterers and corrupters of boys, they insult eunuchs (τοὺς εὐνοῦχους) and those once married (μονογάμους)." ⁹⁴

Athenagoras uses the word "eunuch" essentially as a synonym for "unmarried" and "virgin." The latter two terms occur in Paul's discussion of the value of remaining single in 1 Cor 7:25–38, and "eunuch" has almost certainly been used under the influence of Jesus' saying in Matt 19:12. In fact, celibacy, or the notion of remaining unmarried for the sake of the kingdom, was commonly rendered by the term εὐνουχία from the time of Athenagoras onwards.⁹⁵ That Jesus' saying recorded in Matt 19:12 had a strong influence on the lives of Christians in the early church can hardly be denied. Nor can it be denied that Jesus' eunuch-saying was primarily understood in a figurative sense of those who were able to remain continent in singleness. Finally, the writer examined below extends the application of the "eunuch" figure beyond the reference to singles who exercise self-control over their sexual life.

Clement of Alexandria

In Book 3 of the *Stromata* Clement of Alexandria is walking the fence as he refutes the teaching of the libertines on the one hand while he responds, on the other hand, to ascetics like Tatian and Marcion who forbade marriage altogether.⁹⁶ Matt 19:12 was one of the proof texts employed by the Gnostic heretics in support of their depreciation of marriage. These heretics argued that marriage was fornication and taught that it was introduced by the devil. Furthermore, they claimed to be imitating the Lord in their practice in that he never married.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *Plea for the Christians* 34 (LCC 1:338).

⁹⁵ This is true throughout Book 3 of Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* (cf. Ford, "St Paul, the Philogamist," 326–27 and n. 5). Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* 5.24.5) calls Melito, bishop of Sardis, "Melito the eunuch (τὸν εὐνοῦχον), who lived entirely in the Holy Spirit."

⁹⁶ In *Stromata* 3.5.40–44 Clement is replying to the libertines; then in 3.6.45–3.7.60 he replies to the ascetics; in 3.8.61–3.10.70 he again returns to the libertines. The last line in 3.10.70 seems to sum up both extremes: "Accordingly, those who from hatred do not marry or from desire use the flesh as if it were not a matter of right and wrong, are not in the number of the saved with whom the Lord is present" (trans. H. Chadwick; LCC 2:72).

⁹⁷ Clement has a threefold response to this argument in *Stromata* 3.6.49. The reasons the Lord did not marry are as follows: "In the first place he had his own bride,

What is most interesting is Clement's response to such an interpretation of Matt 19:11–12. He says in *Stromata* 3.6.50:

Concerning the words, "Not all can receive this saying. There are some eunuchs who were born so, and some who were made eunuchs by men, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; let him receive it who can receive it," they do not realize the context. After his word about divorce some asked him whether, if that is the position in relation to women, it is better not to marry; and it was then that the Lord said: "Not all can receive this saying, but those to whom it is granted." What the questioners wanted to know was whether, when a man's wife has been condemned for fornication, it is allowable for him to marry another.⁹⁸

Though some have argued that Clement is here, once again, citing this text in the customary way—that is, by making v 11 a response to the disciples' "It is better not to marry" in v 10⁹⁹—we must admit that Clement recognizes some kind of relationship between the eunuchs of v 12 and those disciples who object to Jesus' teaching that they may not remarry after divorcing their wives for fornication. In what way are the eunuchs in v 12 like those men in v 9 who are now in a state of singleness through the divorce of their wives for fornication?

Arriving at a correct analysis of Clement's exegesis of Matt 19:11–12 involves discovering what Clement says about "eunuchs" elsewhere in his writings. In *Paedagogus* 3.26 Clement speaks out against men and women who cultivate artificial beauty. Then he notes that there are scores of eunuchs who, because they are incapable of sexual pleasure, can minister to those who want to have some love affair and not raise suspicion. He then says: "The true eunuch, however, is not he who is unable, but he who is unwilling to gratify his passions."¹⁰⁰

In *Stromata* 3.1.1 Clement merely notes how the followers of Basilides interpret Matt 19:11–12 (and it is to this interpretation that Clement specifically responds in the above quote). The key point of the interpretation by the followers of Basilides is that the eunuchs

the Church; and in the next place he was no ordinary man that he should also be in need of some helpmeet after the flesh. Nor was it necessary for him to beget children since he abides eternally and was born the only Son of God" (LCC 2:63). Then Clement cites Matt 19:6; Luke 18:8; Matt 24:19; and Acts 1:7 to show the Lord's approval of the married state and that he wanted the world to continue from generation to generation.

⁹⁸LCC 2:63.

⁹⁹Cf. J. Dupont, *Mariage et divorce dans l'évangile: Matthieu 19,3–12 et parallèles* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959) 166, n. 2.

¹⁰⁰FC 23:221.

who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom “derive this idea, . . . from a wish to avoid the distractions involved in marriage, because they are afraid of having to waste time in providing the necessities of life.”¹⁰¹ This sounds very much like some of the remarks Paul makes in 1 Cor 7:25–35 concerning the benefits of the single life.

In another passage (*Stromata* 3.1.4) Clement speaks of continence in the widest sense of a discipline of one’s whole life. It is not concerned only with sexual abstinence. Continence (ἐγκράτεια), he says,

does not only teach us to exercise self-control (σωφρονεῖν); it is rather that self-control is granted to us, since it is a divine power and grace. Accordingly I must declare what is the opinion of our people about this subject. Our view is that we welcome as blessed the state of abstinence from marriage in those to whom this has been granted by God (ἡμεῖς εὐνουχίαν μὲν καὶ οἷς τοῦτο δεδωρηται ὑπὸ θεοῦ μακαρίζομεν [cf. Matt. 19:11b]). We admire monogamy and the high standing of single marriage (τὸν ἕνα γάμον), holding that we ought to share suffering with another and “bear one another’s burdens,” lest anyone thinks he stands securely should himself fall.¹⁰²

In this passage Clement clearly understands the never-before-married state to be a gift granted by God.

In *Stromata* 3.7.59 Clement again notes that continence is not merely in relation to sexual relations but concerns all the indulgences that the soul craves.

As for ourselves, we set high value on continence which arises from love to the Lord and seeks that which is good for its own sake, sanctifying the temple of the Spirit. It is good if for the sake of the kingdom of heaven a man emasculates himself (διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν εὐνουχίζειν ἑαυτὸν) from all desire, and “purifies his conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”¹⁰³

Here, Clement does not understand the third category of eunuchs in Matt 19:12 to apply only to one who never marries.¹⁰⁴ The one who never marries is like the one who resists desire in that both exercise the virtue of self-control.

Finally, in *Stromata* 3.15.99, Clement again seems to be responding to the misinterpretation of Matt 19:12 given by the heretics in

¹⁰¹LCC 2:40.

¹⁰²LCC 2:41–42.

¹⁰³LCC 2:67. Cf. Schneider, *TDNT* 2:768.

¹⁰⁴Tertullian (*To His Wife* 1.6 [ACW 13:18]) applies the third category of eunuchs in Matt 19:12 to the condition of those who refrain from sexual relations within marriage!

3.1.1. He concludes: "but blessed are those who have made themselves eunuchs, free from all sin, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven by their abstinence from the world."¹⁰⁵

These, then, are all of the references to Matt 19:12 in the writings of Clement of Alexandria.¹⁰⁶ They indicate clearly that Clement employs the terms ἐγκράτεια and εὐνουχία "in their widest sense of a discipline of one's whole life and conduct rather than in the narrower sense of abstinence from coitus and he recognizes that the duties of marriage are just as much things belonging to the Lord as the duties of a continent life (c[hap.] 12)."¹⁰⁷

It is perhaps not by accident nor due to Clement's own hermeneutical practice¹⁰⁸ that he interprets the third category of eunuchs (Matt 19:12c) in the broad sense noted above. The Gnostic heretics were using Matt 19:12 to support their own deprecation of marriage. Thus in arguing against the heretics' distorted view of marriage,¹⁰⁹ it would hardly have been advantageous to interpret Jesus' eunuch-saying straightforwardly as a challenge (for those who could make room for it) to forego marital life for the sake of being more devoted to the Lord. To emphasize this aspect of Jesus' teaching in Matt 19:3-12 would have only justified the heretics' distorted practice.

This brings us back to *Stromata* 3.6.50 and the point that Clement *does* emphasize in his own interpretation of Matt 19:12 in the context of vv 3-12. For Clement, Jesus' condemnation of divorce followed by remarriage to another¹¹⁰ is evidence of Jesus' high view of the marriage relationship. The heretics who oppose marriage and use Matt 19:12 as one of their proof texts, says Clement, do not take note of the context in which Jesus makes this remark about "eunuchs," one that exhibits a high view of marriage.

After his word about divorce some asked him whether, if that is the position in relation to women, it is better not to marry; and it was then that the Lord said: "Not all can receive this saying, but those to whom it is granted."¹¹¹ What the questioners wanted to know was whether,

¹⁰⁵LCC 2:87.

¹⁰⁶Cf. *Biblia Patristica 1: Des origines à Clément d'Alexandrie et Tertullien* (Paris: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1975) 271.

¹⁰⁷Ford, "St Paul, the Philogamist," 327.

¹⁰⁸Clement talks about others who pervert the words of the Lord (3.4.27), misapply sound doctrine (3.4.29), interpret in a literal sense sayings intended to be understood allegorically (3.4.38), do not interpret contextually (3.6.50), and force Scripture in favor of their own immoral opinions (3.8.61). Clement is not above hermeneutical errors himself, of course.

¹⁰⁹Cf. R. M. Grant, "The Heresy of Tatian," *JTS* NS 5 (1954) 62-68.

¹¹⁰Clement emphasizes "single marriage" throughout Book 3 (*Stromata* 3.1.4; 3.11.74; 3.12.80, 82).

¹¹¹For the meaning of Matt 19:11 and the debate over what "this saying" refers to in the context of Matt 19:9-12, see W. A. Heth and G. J. Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce*:

when a man's wife has been condemned for fornication, it is allowable to him to marry another.

Clement thinks the close connection of the eunuch-saying with Jesus' saying in Matt 19:9 should be obvious to the reader of Matthew's Gospel. What does Clement see in this passage that the modern day reader has apparently overlooked?

In light of the ascetics who basically condemned marriage by employing Matt 19:12, Clement is most likely suppressing (though not misinterpreting) the invitation to singleness for those who have been enabled to accept it (vv 12c-d). Instead he focuses on Jesus' statement in v 11, "Not all men can accept this statement," where "this statement" refers to the hard saying on the need to remain single (cf. 1 Cor 7:11a?) after divorcing adulterous wives (v 9),¹¹² since any remarriage results in adultery (cf. Matt 5:32b). This is the teaching to which the disciples have just objected (v 10). On this understanding, Jesus, as if to demonstrate that continence in singleness after a broken marriage is not as difficult as the disciples make it to be, presents a most convincing example by arguing from the greater to the lesser. Those who must live without sexual relations after an unfortunate divorce are in no worse a position than those who were born eunuchs or made eunuchs by men. These eunuchs live apart from marital relations unaided by the grace of God. Jesus' disciples, who find themselves in a state of singleness after divorce, should be able to do as much since they are aided by the enabling grace of God. Jesus then proclaims the existence of a new category of "eunuchs" (v 12c). These so-called "eunuchs" have a special grace-gift or calling from God and have chosen not to marry because they have become so captivated by the kingdom of God (cf. Matt 13:44) and its claims upon their lives (cf. 1 Cor 7:17-24). Jesus then concludes with a call to faith: "He who is able to accept this, let him accept it" (v 12d). In this context the call to faithful living is directed to two groups of people: (1) those disciples who might be so inclined to forego marriage because of their personal calling to be totally devoted to their Lord (as Paul found himself to be; cf. 1 Cor. 7:7a, 8b, 25-26, 28b, 29-35, 40); and (2) those disciples who find it difficult to accept and live by Jesus' teaching concerning the lifelong permanence of mar-

Towards an Evangelical Understanding of New Testament Teaching (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985) 53-68.

¹¹²Clement is not focusing on the negative, almost sarcastic remark of the disciples (v 10) that it would be best not to marry at all if a man cannot get out of an undesirable marriage and begin again with another. Perhaps Clement is attempting to correct those who did interpret the passage in this way and then used it to teach that marriage should be avoided altogether.

riage, namely, that faithful disciples do not remarry after divorce. Clement of Alexandria appears to focus on the latter emphasis of Matt 19:9–12 in his attempt to defend the sanctity of marriage in the face of those heretics who degraded it.

This understanding of the eunuch-saying in the context of the divorce controversy that precedes it is not only attractive, but it helps to explain two phenomena in the early church: (1) Many Christians chose to forego marriage in their desire to serve Christ as best they knew how; and (2) the early church in the first five centuries almost unanimously rejected remarriage after divorce, even if the divorce was for Matthew's *πορνεία* exception. Clement affirms that the ability to forego marriage in one's desire to serve God is a gift granted by God; but the eunuch-saying also carries a message for those disciples who feared the consequences of violating Jesus' teaching about the lifelong permanence of marriage. Jesus assures his disciples that God will grant separated spouses the grace necessary to remain single and avoid committing adultery by remarriage to another. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt 19:26). God enables faithful disciples to do that which he commands.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has demonstrated that remaining single "because of the claims and interests of the kingdom of God" was clearly impressed on the minds and lives of many of the early Christians. The practice of celibacy in the early church cannot be wholly or even primarily attributed to the influence of the ascetic tendencies of the day, though it was certainly aided by them. Both the concepts and the terminology of Matt 19:12 and 1 Cor 7:7 stand behind this practice. The ability to remain continent in singleness was considered to be a gift granted by God, and the one who was entrusted with such a gift was exhorted to remember the Giver of it and to beware of thinking that his abilities were found in himself. When God is the giver of both grace and gifts it is inappropriate to think that the one with the gift of singleness somehow stands on a higher spiritual plane than those who marry. Whether single or married, what matters is obedience to God and becoming more like Christ (Rom 8:29).

The single person devoted to the Lord is certainly not a second-class citizen in the church as is often implied today.¹¹³ On the contrary, the single person who feels called to a life of singleness for the sake of serving the Lord more fully—let a warning against some ascetic legalism here be sounded—may even be thought of as an eschatological sign that Christians are living between the times: the time of

¹¹³Cf. J. Bayly, "Saved, Single, and Second Class," *Eternity*, March 1983, 23–26.

Christ's resurrection and the time of his parousia. The single person committed to Christ reminds the married person that he too must be committed to Christ (cf. 1 Cor 7:29), for a time is coming when men neither marry nor are given in marriage (Matt 22:30ff.). Marriage has an eschatological limit, but one's relationship with and devotion to the Lord does not. Uppermost in every disciple's mind ought to be the urgency of obedience to our Lord and the claims and interests of his kingdom.

FIDEISM AND PRESUPPOSITIONALISM

STEPHEN R. SPENCER

The oft-asserted view that a presuppositional apologetic is inherently fideistic raises the question of whether Cornelius Van Til was, indeed, a fideist. When Van Til's writings are examined in light of fideism defined as an advocacy of faith as the sole source of reliance in the ascertaining of truth, fideism is seen as incompatible with Van Til's position. His presuppositional approach manifests a concern for truth, for rationality, and for a faith that has both content and foundation.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

CERTAINLY one of the most frequent characterizations of the presuppositional apologetic of Cornelius Van Til is that it is "fideistic." Lewis, for example, is concerned that Van Til, despite serving forty-five years as a professor of apologetics, has constructed a system of theology, not a system of apologetics.¹ In Lewis's estimation, Van Til has not supplied a means of disputing with unbelievers concerning the truthfulness of Christianity. "In the name of defending the faith he has left the faith defenseless."²

Montgomery likewise warns against Van Til's tendency to treat the unbeliever as a believer, working out systematic theology and its implications rather than verifying Christianity by "focusing upon their needs" and using as a "starting point" the "common rationality."³ Montgomery fears that Van Til has given the unbeliever "the impression that our gospel is as aprioristically, fideistically irrational as the presuppositional claims of its competitors."⁴

¹G. R. Lewis, "Van Til and Carnell-Part I," in *Jerusalem and Athens* (ed. E. R. Geehan; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971) 349.

²*Ibid.*, 361; see also his review of W. White, Jr., *Van Til: Defender of the Faith* (*Eternity* [1979] 44).

³J. W. Montgomery, "Once Upon An *A Priori*," in *Jerusalem and Athens* (ed. E. R. Geehan; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971) 391.

⁴*Ibid.*

Pinnock also raises the same issue. While saluting the contribution that Van Til has made to "a virile twentieth century apologetic," Pinnock contends that "a curious epistemology derived from a modern Calvinistic school of philosophy in Holland has led him to align his orthodox theology with a form of irrational fideism."⁵

Geisler, in his *Christian Apologetics*, includes Van Til in his chapter on fideism along with Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Barth. Geisler states that Van Til "speaks from a strong Reformed Biblical perspective theologically and yet in an absolute revelational presuppositionalism apologetically."⁶ "Methodological fideism" is Geisler's term for this position.⁷ Geisler notes five "central contentions" that are characteristic of fideism (including, apparently, that of Van Til): (1) faith alone is the way to God; (2) truth is not found in the purely rational or objective realm, if it is there at all; (3) evidence and reason do not point definitively in the direction of God; (4) the tests of truth are existential, not rational; and (5) not only God's revelation but his grace is the source of all truth.⁸

Hanna has contended that "presuppositionism" (as he terms it) is able, in response to inquiries as to the warrant for belief, to answer only "in terms of obscurantistic fideism."⁹ Hanna regularly uses presuppositionism and fideism interchangeably in his book.

More recently, Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley have argued that—protestations to the contrary notwithstanding—Van Til's apologetic has no place (or at least no warranted place) for reasoning with or giving evidence to unbelievers.¹⁰ In their judgment, fideism is the inevitable result of Van Til's presuppositionalism.

Are these critics correct? Is Van Til's presuppositionalism fideistic? This study considers the meaning of fideism, examines its appropriateness as a label for Van Til's position, and concludes with a more extended analysis of the term "presuppositional."

FIDEISM

The diversity in the definitions of fideism is striking. Anything approaching unanimity is lamentably absent. It is not that the definitions are antithetical, but rather that their nuances vary significantly. Obviously, the term derives from the Latin word for faith (*fides*), but

⁵C. H. Pinnock, "A Philosophy of Christian Evidences," *Jerusalem and Athens* (ed. E. R. Geehan; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971) 425.

⁶N. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976) 56.

⁷*Ibid.*, 57.

⁸*Ibid.*, 58–59.

⁹M. M. Hanna, *Crucial Questions in Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 96.

¹⁰R. C. Sproul, J. Gerstner, A. Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 304–9.

having agreed upon that, one must decide upon the precise significance of the term. Fideism focuses on faith, but how is faith defined? How is it related to reason, knowledge, proof, and evidence? How is it related to truth? These questions are not usually given the same answers.

Perhaps a composite definition of fideism can be constructed. The modifiers that are most often associated with the term, either implicitly or explicitly, include "irrational," "blind," "subjectivistic," or "leap." There is also the frequent implication that faith is its own warrant, its own criterion, in the adjudication of truth-claims. Fideism would therefore advocate faith as the sole or perhaps final source of reliance in the ascertaining of truth. This statement may be limited to religious or theological matters or it may be extended to all epistemological questions. The definition would include the denigration of reason as useful in the specified realm. Additionally, fideism seems to call into question (or perhaps, more passively, to ignore) the grounds for faith, thus becoming "a blind leap in the dark," characterized by a focus upon the agent's *activity* of believing rather than upon the *object* of one's belief (subjectivism rather than objectivism). Thus faith, that is, the act of believing, is its own standard, its own warrant. One decides by deciding. Faith is a kind of "will to believe."

If this is an accurate description of fideism, then it would appear to be unacceptable for Christians because it is incompatible with Scripture. Christ urges the Jews to believe him because of his works (John 5:36; 10:37, 38). In fact, in John 5, Christ puts forth several bases or reasons for believing in him: his words, his works, John the Baptist's witness, and the witness of God and Scripture.

Moreover, faith is repeatedly represented in Scripture as trust or reliance upon that which is trustworthy; assent to that which is worthy. Faith thus has an object and a basis. It is intimately related to truth and not merely to the individual's strength of will. Faith is a relationship to that which is; it does not create its object. In short, faith is trust in (involving assent to) someone or something that is worthy of trust. And faith does not seem itself to be the criterion of the "worthiness" of the object; rather it is a response to that which already meets a criterion of "worthiness," whatever that may be. Moreover, the opposition (and perhaps even the distinction) between faith and reason (or believing and knowing), which is implicit in fideism, is foreign to Scripture.

As defined above, fideism falls short of the biblical pattern of faith. It is also incompatible with Van Til's position. As early as 1932, in what is in many respects an expansion of his 1925 Th.M. thesis by the same title, Van Til attempted to "remove the common misunderstanding that Christianity is opposed to factual investigation." "The

greater the amount of detailed study and the more carefully such study is undertaken, the more truly Christian will the method be"¹¹ (referring to what he terms "the inductive aspect of the method of implication"). To hold to the doctrine of the authority of Scripture when the believer "knows that it can be empirically shown to be contrary to the facts of Scripture themselves" is "obscurantistic," according to Van Til. "It goes without saying that such should not be his attitude."¹²

In his syllabus on *Christian—Theistic Evidences*, Van Til notes, "it is quite commonly held that we [apparently, Van Til is referring to "modern educated men"] cannot accept anything that is not consonant with the result of a sound scientific methodology. With this we can as Christians heartily agree."¹³ Later in that work he notes that "the Christian position is certainly not opposed to experimentation and observation."¹⁴

On pp. 34–35 of this work, he explicitly discusses fideism, dividing its advocates into two classes: "the consistent fideists hold that no defense of any sort is possible. The inconsistent fideists contend that Christianity may be scientifically, but cannot be philosophically, defended."¹⁵ He describes the former group:

They saw no way of harmonizing the facts of the Christian religion with the "constitution and course of nature." They gave up the idea of a philosophical apologetics entirely. This fideistic attitude comes to expression frequently in the statement of the experiential proof of the truth of Christianity. People will say that they know that they are saved and that Christianity is true no matter what the philosophical or scientific evidence for or against it may be. And this is done not only by those who have had no opportunity to investigate the evidence for Christianity, but also by those who have. But, in thus seeking to withdraw from all intellectual argument, such fideists have virtually admitted the validity of the argument against Christianity. They will have to believe in their hearts what they have virtually allowed to be intellectually indefensible.¹⁶

Thus Van Til conceives of commitment to Christ and Christianity as involving investigation. What Christianity asserts must indeed be the

¹¹C. Van Til, *Survey of Christian Epistemology* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969; retitled reprint of Van Til's 1932 work, *The Metaphysics of Apologetics*) 7.

¹²C. Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969) 35.

¹³C. Van Til, *Christian-Theistic Evidences* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976) x.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 34.

real state of affairs or else the commitment is erroneous. Faith must have truth as its object. Christians ought not to believe (or, "believe in") that which is false. Van Til states:

Christianity meets every legitimate demand of reason. Surely Christianity is not irrational. To be sure, it must be accepted on faith, but surely it must not be taken on blind faith. Christianity is capable of rational defense.¹⁷

When we say that God is a mystery for us we do not mean that our knowledge of him is not true as far as it goes. When we say that God is "absolutely Other" we do not mean that there is not a rational relation between God and us. As God created us in accordance with his plan, that is, as God created us in accordance with his absolute rationality, so there must be a rational relationship from us to God. Christianity is, in the last analysis not an absolute irrationalism, but an absolute "rationalism." In fact we may contrast every non-Christian epistemology with Christian epistemology by saying that Christian epistemology believes in an ultimate rationalism while all other systems of epistemology believe in an ultimate irrationalism.¹⁸

Van Til, at least if we give credence to his own statement, is not a fideist.¹⁹ Perhaps, however, he is inconsistent with his stated principles. Perhaps he fails to realize his goal. Does Van Til in the elaboration of his presuppositional apologetic violate his ostensive commitments?

PRESUPPOSITIONALISM AND PROOF

In one of several passages in which Van Til explains what he means by the term presuppositionalism,²⁰ he states, "To argue by presupposition is to indicate what are the epistemological and metaphysical principles that underlie and control one's method."²¹ He explains:

The method of reasoning by presupposition may be said to be indirect rather than direct. The issue between believers and non-believers in Christian Theism cannot be settled by a direct appeal to "facts" or "laws" whose nature and significance is already agreed upon by both

¹⁷C. Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972) 184.

¹⁸C. Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (3rd ed., Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967) 41.

¹⁹See also G. L. Bahnsen, "Inductivism, Inerrancy, and Presuppositionalism," *JETS* 20 (1977) 292-95; and T. Notaro, *Van Til and the Use of Evidence* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Craig, 1980).

²⁰Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, 99-105.

²¹*Ibid.*, 99.

parties to the debate. The question is rather as to what is the final reference-point required to make the "facts" and "laws" intelligible. The question is as to what the "facts" and "laws" really are. Are they what the non-Christian methodology assumes that they are? Are they what the Christian theistic methodology presupposes they are?

The answer to this question cannot be finally settled by any direct discussion of "facts." It must, in the last analysis, be settled indirectly. The Christian apologist must place himself upon the position of his opponent, assuming the correctness of his [the opponent's] method merely for argument's sake, in order to show him that on such a position the "facts" are not facts and the "laws" are not laws. He must also ask the non-Christian to place himself upon the Christian position for argument's sake in order that he may be shown that only upon such a basis do "facts" and "laws" appear intelligible.²²

Later Van Til clarifies this position when he writes,

every bit of historical investigation, whether it be in the directly Biblical field, archaeology or in general history, is bound to confirm the truth of the claims of the Christian position. But I would not talk endlessly about facts and more facts without ever challenging the non-believer's philosophy of fact.²³

Van Til is concerned, therefore, to deal with the foundations of a philosophy of life or a world-view, on the conviction that the meaning of particular terms and aspects of life is determined by those foundations. However, he does not seem to argue for a more or less arbitrary postulation of the Christian foundation as merely one of several alternatives, each of which is viable. Rather, he is arguing that though there are a number of ostensible alternatives, only one is in fact viable: "It will then appear that Christian theism . . . is the only position which gives human reason a field for successful operation and a method of true progress in knowledge."²⁴

This is so, in Van Til's judgment, because the only alternative to Christian theism is a position ultimately based upon chance. Speaking of the "natural man" or unregenerate, Van Til points out,

On his assumption his own rationality is a product of chance. On his assumption even the laws of logic which he employs are products of chance. The rationality and purpose that he may be searching for are still bound to be products of chance. So then the Christian apologist, whose position requires him to hold that Christian theism is really true and as such must be taken as the presupposition which alone makes the acquisition of knowledge in any field intelligible, must join his "friend"

²²Ibid., 100-101.

²³Ibid., 199.

²⁴Ibid., 102.

in his hopeless gyrations so as to point out to him that his efforts are always in vain.²⁵

What are the implications of this for apologetic disputation? Since the discussion, according to Van Til, concerns the foundations of one's position, can we do anything besides merely assert our message? The answer to this question has been indicated in the quotation from Van Til. The Christian position must be demonstrated to be the only viable foundation for life in all of its complexity. For Van Til, presuppositions are proven (albeit indirectly), not merely "picked":

the best and only possible proof for the existence of such a God is that his existence is required for the uniformity of nature and for the coherence of all things in the world. We cannot *prove* the existence of beams underneath a floor if by proof we mean that they must be ascertainable in the way that we can see the chairs and tables of the room. But the very idea of a floor as the support of tables and chairs requires the idea of beams that are underneath. Thus there is absolutely certain proof for the existence of God and the truth of Christian theism.²⁶

Van Til contends that the argument by presupposition is "objectively valid" even if it is "subjectively unacceptable" to the unregenerate.²⁷ The denial of Christianity's truth does nothing to detract from its actual veracity:

the Reformed apologist maintains that there is an absolutely valid argument for the existence of God and for the truth of Christian theism. He cannot do less without virtually admitting that God's revelation to man is not clear. It is fatal for the Reformed apologist to admit that man has done justice to the objective evidence if he comes to any other conclusion than that of the truth of Christian theism.²⁸

Like the Reformed preacher proclaiming the Gospel to an unresponsive unregenerate, "he does not say that his message is less certainly true because of its non-acceptance by the natural man."²⁹

Thus, contrary to the prevailing consensus by both critic and disciple, Van Til does have a place for proofs in his apologetics. Frame has collected a rather formidable list of passages in which Van Til articulates his position regarding proofs.³⁰

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 103.

²⁷Ibid., 104.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰J. M. Frame, "The Problem of Theological Paradox," in *The Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (ed. G. North; Vallecito, CA: Ross, 1976) 301.

To say that the argument for Christianity and for the existence of God is absolutely valid, I am merely applying the idea that God's revelation without and within man is perspicuous. If then man rightly interprets this revelation he has an absolutely valid argument for the truth.³¹

There is objective evidence in abundance and it is sufficiently clear. Men *ought*, if only they reasoned rightly, to come to the conclusion that God exists. That is to say, if the theistic proof is constructed as it ought to be constructed, it is objectively valid, whatever the attitude of those to whom it comes may be.³²

If theistically stated, the arguments do nothing but give the content of the revelation of God to man and argue that it is the only reasonable thing to do for a human being to accept this revelation.³³

He goes on to explain what he means by "correct construction" of the theistic proof:

To be constructed rightly, theistic proof ought to presuppose the ontological trinity and contend that, unless we may make this presupposition, all human predication is meaningless. The words "cause," "purpose," and "being," used as universals in the phenomenal world, could not be so used with meaning unless we may presuppose the self-contained God. If the matter is put this way, one argument is as sound as the other. Nor is any one of the arguments then at any point vulnerable. And future research cannot change their validity.³⁴

In Van Til's judgment, the theistic proofs should be stated "in such a manner as to make God the presupposition of the possibility of predication in every sphere of life."³⁵

What is the relationship of Van Til's proof of the existence of God by presupposition to the classic theistic proofs? Van Til states:

the true theistic proofs undertake to show that the ideas of existence (ontological proof), of cause (cosmological proof), and purpose (teleological proof) are meaningless unless they presuppose the existence of God.³⁶

All of the theistic arguments should really be taken together and reduced to the one argument of the possibility of human predication. Intelligent predication about anything with respect to nature or with

³¹Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, 180.

³²*Ibid.*, 49.

³³C. Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974) 199.

³⁴Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, 49-50.

³⁵Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 198.

³⁶Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, 190.

respect to man were impossible unless God existed as the ultimate reference point of it all.³⁷

In answer to the question, then, it is clear that Van Til attempts to reconstruct the proofs in terms of distinctly Christian formulations of the concepts that are involved as well as to "deepen" them by seeking for the only ultimately viable foundation for all of life and reality.

PRESUPPOSITION AS THE "TRANSCENDENTAL ONTIC PRECONDITION"

Bahnsen writes that "when world-views collide, the Christian transcendental epistemology calls for us to ask what foundations knowledge must have in order for man intelligibly to understand the facts at all."³⁸ Elsewhere it has been observed that:

many followers of Van Til see his system as a kind of transcendental argument which contends that it is absolutely necessary to presuppose the divine revelation in the Bible before one can consistently think, communicate, do science, or make any sense out of life or his world.³⁹

Both quotations include a crucial element for interpreting Van Til's position. That element is the "transcendental" dimension to his thought. As White notes, Van Til found his term "presupposition" in Immanuel Kant.⁴⁰ In his first *Critique*, Kant "found it necessary to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for faith,"⁴¹ at least in relationship to three topics: "God, freedom, and immortality."⁴² In his second *Critique*, Kant argues for the existence of God, not on the basis of speculative reason ("knowledge") but rather practical reason ("faith"). Kant attempts to establish that, because of the reality of freedom and moral activity (involving also immortality as the occasion for future judgment of one's morality), it must be concluded that God also exists as the undergirding of morality and immortality.

In his discussion Kant uses terms such as presupposition, supreme ground, postulate, supposition, and assumption.⁴³ His point seems to

³⁷Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 102.

³⁸G. Bahnsen, "Pragmatism, Prejudice, and Presuppositionalism," in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (ed., G. North; Vallecito, CA: Ross, 1976) 290.

³⁹N. L. Geisler and P. D. Feinberg, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 264.

⁴⁰W. White, Jr., *Van Til: Defender of the Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1979) 74-75.

⁴¹I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Unabridged edition, trans. N. K. Smith; New York: St. Martins, 1965) 29.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (trans. L. W. Beck; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956) 128-36.

be that God is the "transcendental precondition" for freedom, morality, and immortality. That is, God is the essential or necessary foundation in reality which makes possible these aspects of our life and experience.⁴⁴

This is not to say that Van Til or his followers are Kantians or that they endorse Kant's moral argument for the existence of God. It is merely to clarify that, by the term "presupposition" (as it refers to God), Van Til seems to have in mind not merely an epistemological axiom (and surely not an arbitrary or voluntaristic epistemological axiom) but rather an ontological (his term is "metaphysical") referent (which is, of course, significant for both epistemology and axiology). He is referring to that which (more properly, "him who") is the sole sufficient support and explanation of all of life and reality. When we examine life in all of its complexity, only one explanation is sufficient—the Triune God of whom Scripture speaks, who created, sustains, and guides all that exists.

If such be the case, Van Til's presuppositionalism is scarcely fideistic. It must be admitted that Van Til's criticisms of traditional apologetics and the classic theistic proofs sometimes are less than full-orbed and judiciously balanced, which can easily lead (and has in fact led) to misinterpretation. Moreover, some of his followers exceed him in opacity and extremity of statement, further distorting the picture. Nevertheless, Van Til's presuppositionalism does not manifest the various characteristics of fideism noted earlier. Instead, he manifests concern for truth, for rationality, for faith that has both content and basis. Van Til's position may be considered by some to be erroneous, but it cannot rightly be considered fideistic.

AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

One of the aspects of Van Til's presuppositional argument is the notion that only God is "sufficient" as a foundation for life and reality. In light of the continuing discussion on the meaning and specification of "adequacy" as it relates to evidence and proof, it would seem advisable to those working with Van Til's position to specify what constitutes "sufficiency" or "adequacy" as they use it. Van Til's substantiation of his claim regarding God as alone sufficient, arguing by means of the "impossibility of the contrary" (i.e., a chance universe) is essentially the theme of his *Survey of Christian Epistemology*. Perhaps the discussion could well start there.

⁴⁴See C. S. Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 15–73, for a further discussion of this issue in Kant.

Followers of Van Til might also compare his "presupposition" with John Montgomery's "self-evident axioms,"⁴⁵ Hanna's "universal givens,"⁴⁶ Geisler's "undeniable truths,"⁴⁷ and Clark's "unprovable assumptions."⁴⁸ In contrast to Van Til, these terms would appear to be epistemological, not ontological, but that point needs to be carefully argued in terms of their discussion. If, as has been argued, Van Til's presuppositionalism is not fideistic, the dispute with rival schools of thought must lie elsewhere than in the use of evidence and proof.

⁴⁵J. W. Montgomery, *Faith Founded On Fact* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978) 92-93 n. 27.

⁴⁶Hanna, *Crucial Questions*, 95.

⁴⁷Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 143-45.

⁴⁸G. H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 29.

STEPHEN'S SPEECH: A THEOLOGY OF ERRORS?

REX A. KOIVISTO

The points of seeming divergence between Stephen's words in Acts 7 and the OT record have engendered attacks on inerrancy by some and attempts at reconciliation by others. A current approach to reconciliation involves the attempt to distinguish between inerrancy of content and inerrancy of record in Acts 7. This views the divergences in Stephen's speech as admissible errors since inspiration is only posited of the author of Acts and not of Stephen as a character in the narrative. The present article seeks to show that three of these divergences are merely insertions into the narrative, not errors, and furthermore, that these divergences are calculated theological insertions. The result is a renewed need to seek their reconciliation with the OT record.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

STEPHEN'S speech in Acts 7:2-53 has remained an enigma for much of modern scholarship. In its current form it is clearly the longest speech in the book of Acts, yet it diverges from the other speeches in the book in that it is non-apostolic and apparently non-kerygmatic.¹ Furthermore, the content of the speech is held by some to be little more than a dry recitation of the history of the Hebrews, having little to do with the judicial framework into which the author of Acts has placed it.²

An even more difficult quandary is left for those who look for historical consistency with the OT in the speech, for it diverges from the OT historical record in at least five places.³ Several approaches toward a reconciliation of these conflicts have been attempted, but

¹Bruce classifies this speech as apologetic. See F. F. Bruce, *The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Tyndale, 1942) 5.

²See particularly F. J. Foakes Jackson, "Stephen's Speech in Acts," *JBL* 49 (1930) 283-86; and Benjamin Wisner Bacon, "Stephen's Speech: Its Argument and Doctrinal Relationship," in *Biblical and Semitic Studies* (New York: Yale, 1901) 213-29.

³Cadbury listed ten divergences, but he included those instances where the speech introduces material that is otherwise unknown from the OT as well as those instances

one that has been gaining vogue in recent years is an attempt to distinguish between inerrancy of content and inerrancy of record.⁴ This option leaves the divergences in Stephen's speech as admissible errors since inspiration, and its corollary, inerrancy, need only be posited of the author of Acts and not of Stephen as a character in the narrative.

Aside from the hermeneutical problems such an approach introduces,⁵ those who would adopt this distinction as an attempt to retain inerrancy fail to observe two key factors: (1) the function of the so-called errors in the theology of the speech; and (2) Luke's adoption of that theology in Acts. Leaving the Lucan adoption to be treated elsewhere,⁶ it is the aim of this study to demonstrate that at least three of the "errors" in Stephen's speech are not inadvertent mistakes, but are calculated insertions in the narrative designed to emphasize certain theological points. The implication, of course, is that if this is correct, we must take these Stephanic statements seriously and ultimately attempt to reconcile them with the OT record.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STEPHEN'S THEOLOGY

In order to evaluate the function of these discrepancies in the theology of Stephen's speech, it is first necessary to place them in the

where the speech actually conflicts with the OT (H. J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* [New York: Harper, 1955] 102-3). Richard B. Rackham, following a similar inclusive approach, set the total divergences at fifteen (Richard B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Exposition* [London: Methuen, 1901] 99-101).

⁴This view was suggested as early as 1879 by Albert Barnes in *Notes on Acts* (revised edition; New York: Harper, 1879) 138. It was taken up and developed at length, however, by G. T. Stokes in *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1897) 311ff. For others suggesting this option, see the following: William Owen Carver, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville: Broadman, 1916) 69; R. A. Torrey, *Difficulties in the Bible* (Chicago: Moody, n.d.) 97; Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959) 96. More recent suggestions of Lucan accuracy with Stephanic error have been given by Everett F. Harrison and Richard N. Longenecker. Harrison says, "That no alteration [of the problem in 7:14-16] was made by Luke or anyone else to bring the statement into conformity with Genesis speaks well for the accuracy with which the speech of Stephen was transmitted and later recorded by Luke" (E. F. Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church* [Chicago: Moody, 1975] 115). Longenecker similarly writes as follows: "Again, these [apparent confusions in 7:15, 16] are but further examples of the conflation and inexactitudes of Jewish popular religion, which, it seems, Luke simply recorded from his sources in his attempt to be faithful to what Stephen actually said in his portrayal" (Richard N. Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles* [EBC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981] 341).

⁵See, in this regard, Rex A. Koivisto, "Stephen's Speech: A Case Study in Rhetoric and Biblical Inerrancy," *JETS* 20 (1977) 353-64.

⁶See Rex A. Koivisto, "Stephen's Speech and Inerrancy: An Investigation of the Divergences from Old Testament History in Acts 7" (unpublished Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1982) 7-9; 157-59.

context of that speech—it is in their context that Stephen's "errors" show their clearest theological import.

Although the unity of the speech around a common theological theme has been questioned by a number of critics,⁷ there has been a strain of scholarship that has viewed the entire pericope of Acts 6:1–8:3 as an integrated unit, the speech itself being a response to the allegations of Stephen's opponents.⁸ Those accusations are found capsulized in the words of the false⁹ witnesses: "This fellow never stops speaking against the holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."¹⁰ From these words it can be concluded that the case against Stephen hinged upon his proclamation of Jesus of Nazareth, particularly as Jesus related to two of the most sacred Jewish institutions, Temple and Torah. Stephen is accused of saying that Jesus would "destroy" the Temple and "change" the Torah.¹¹ If these charges were sustained, the Sanhedrin could easily classify this as blasphemy, and Stephen would be perceived as having committed a capital offense.¹²

⁷This is mostly due to a tendency to see no relationship between the charges against Stephen and the speech. See Jackson, "Stephen's Speech," 283–86; Alfred Loisy, *Les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1920) 318.

⁸J. Kilgallen traces the exegesis based on an integration with the accusations back to Chrysostom, Augustine, Bede, and Rupert of Dentz in *Stephen's Speech: A Literary and Redactional Study of Acts 7, 2–53* (Analecta Biblica 67; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976) 6; cf. H. Wendt, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar, Part 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1899) 151. More recent exponents of this integration are E. Jacquier, *Les Actes des Apôtres* (Etudes Bibliques; Paris: Lecoffre, 1920) 201; and F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 141.

⁹H. Beyer believes that the witnesses were only false in that they opposed Stephen, whereas Stephen as a Hellenist did speak against the Temple as they claimed. Beyer argues that the degradation of the Temple was Stephen's particular way of declaring the *Herrscher-macht* of Jesus (*Die Apostelgeschichte* [6th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1951] 46). One wonders, however, whether the degradation of the Temple was a Stephanic means of asserting the *Herrscher-macht* of Jesus, or whether Stephen's declaration of the *Herrscher-macht* of Jesus was misunderstood by his hearers as a degradation of the Temple.

¹⁰Acts 6:13–14. Unless otherwise noted, the biblical citations are taken from the NIV. The earlier accusations (6:11) are not the formal judicial allegations, but broad generalizations intended to stir up the crowds against Stephen (cf. 6:12).

¹¹Cf. Longenecker, *Acts*, 336. The words selected by these false witnesses are καταλύω (of the Temple) and ἀλλάσσω (of the Torah). Cf. our Lord's words in John 2:19 (λύω) and the report of these words before the Sanhedrin by "false witnesses" (καταλύω, Matt 26:61; Mark 14:48; 15:29).

¹²Cf. the tradition later collected in the *b. Sanhedrin* 49b: "Stoning is severer than burning, since thus the blasphemer and idol-worshipper are executed. Wherein lies the enormity of these offences?—Because they constitute an attack upon the fundamental belief of Judaism."

Given the not unreasonable assumption that Luke recorded the accusations because he saw a definite correlation between them and the content of the discourse, the next step is to observe any overriding emphases within the speech that correspond to the accusations. In this sense, the structure of the discourse indicates that it is not a dry recitation of well-known sacred history, but rather a carefully selected grouping of certain elements from within that history which were arranged and adapted to prove a theological point in response to legal accusations.¹³ Although there was obviously a great bulk of material available to him, the speechmaker selected and grouped his material under five sections:

- A. Observations on Abraham (7:2-8)
- B. Observations on Joseph (7:9-16)
- C. Observations on Moses (7:17-43)
- D. Observations on the Temple (7:44-50)
- E. Direct application (7:71-53)¹⁴

¹³The cutting edge of Stephanic studies has recently been involved with this careful redactive evaluation and is yielding results in terms of understanding the theological development of the speech. For an excellent treatment of one section of the speech commonly held to be irrelevant, see E. Richard, "The Polemical Character of the Joseph Episode in Acts 7," *JBL* 98 (1979) 255-67.

¹⁴Richard (257) offers a different division of the speech:

- I. History of the Patriarchs (2-16)
 - A. Story of Abraham (2-8)
 - B. Story of Joseph (9-16)
- II. History of Moses (17-19)
 - A. Hebrews in Egypt (17-19)
 - B. Moses prior to the Sinai event (20-29)
 - C. Theophany and mission (30-34)
- III. Thematic section (35-50)
 - A. Moses and the fathers (34-41)
 - B. God and the fathers (42-50)
- IV. Invective against audience (51-53)

J. Bihler, *Die Stephanusgeschichte im Zusammenhang der Apostelgeschichte* (Munchener Theologische Studien; Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1963) vii, finds a simpler threefold division:

- I. Die Geschichte Israels von Abraham bis Moses (2-37)
 - A. Die Abrahamsgeschichte (2-8a) (8a=transition)
 - B. Die Josephs-geschichte (9-16) (17-19=transition)
 - C. Die Mosesgeschichte (20-37)
- II. Israel's Abfall: Gotzendienst und Tempelbau (38-50)
 - A. Der Gotzendienst (38-43)
 - B. Der Bau des Tempels (44-50)
- III. Der Schuld Israels (51-53)

Kilgallen, *Stephen's Speech*, ix-xii, develops it this way:

- I. The Abraham Story (2-7)
- II. The Joseph Story (9-16) (8=transition)

On Abraham

The initial division of the speech ostensibly treats Abraham the patriarch, yet a careful evaluation reveals that the section is much more closely related to the "God of Glory" than to Abraham.¹⁵ Abraham is selected and discussed, of course, as the father of the nation,¹⁶ but his deeds are minimized while the divine activities are maximized. The speech thus gains a theological tenor from the outset. Since Stephen is accused of aberrant theological views, he produces an *apologia* not of himself, but of his theology. Abraham thus serves as a link between the land (which made the Temple of import) and the instructive oracle of Yahweh regarding the land.

With this in mind, the location of the revelatory acts of God rises to prominence. Yahweh gave his revelation to Abraham in Ur and Haran, well outside the limits of the sacred land upon which the Temple came to be constructed (vv 2–4). When Abraham finally arrived in the land of promise, Stephen emphasizes that "(God) gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground" (v 5). Though God promised Abraham the possession of the land, it would be his only after his descendants were enslaved for four hundred years outside the land, "in a country not their own" (v 6). Then, after that lengthy delay, "they will come out of that country and worship me in this place" (v 7).¹⁷

III. The Moses Story (17–43)

IV. The Temple (44–50)

V. Conclusion (51–53)

It should be observed from this sampling that certain elements are commonly held; i.e., the concluding invective against the audience (51–53), the Abraham Story (2–8) and the Joseph Story (9–16). The bulk of variation comes in the division of the larger section of 17–50. Precisely where the Moses section ends and the Temple section begins is difficult to determine due to the use of a Mosaic element (the Tabernacle) as a pivot from which to launch into the discussion of the Temple. It is probably most logical to find a natural break at 44 due to the internal consistency of the unit from a literary standpoint (e.g., the constant use of the rhetorical οὐτος in vv 35, 36, 37, and 38, and the connection of the final οὐτος with the complete thought of 38–43).

¹⁵Note particularly the subject/verb relationship in this section: the divine term ὁ θεός is followed by eight verbs of which it is the subject (Ernst Carl Rauch, "Ueber den Martyrer Stephanus und den Inhalt, Zweck, und Gang seiner Rede; Apostelgeschichte 6 und 7," *TSK* 30 [1857] 363; and K. Panke, "Der Stephanismus der Apostelgeschichte," *TSK* 85 [1912] 4).

¹⁶Adolf Schlatter notes the significance of beginning with Abraham from a thematic perspective in *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1962) 84.

¹⁷It is common to see in this slight redaction of Gen 15:14 an inclusion of the term τόπος as an oblique reference to the Temple, which would not serve as a focal point for worship until at least 430 years of Israel's history had elapsed (J. Bihler, *Stephanusgeschichte*, 43; and E. Jacquier, *Actes*, 2089).

The theological point of this section is clear: the God of Israel is not tied to the land (upon which the Temple rests).¹⁸ The land must not be given the overriding significance that the Jewish contemporaries of Stephen were giving to it. It certainly has importance as the gift of God to the descendants of Abraham in the fulfillment of promise (vv 6-7), but to require that the God of the promise be limited in his revelation and/or worship to one place is to reduce that God to a localized deity unworthy of proper respect.

That this consideration should be important to Luke in his theology and structure of Acts is clear. To this point the Church itself had been localized in Jerusalem, impeding progress on the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Acts 1:8). It is only after Stephen's speech and martyrdom that the Word of God is finally extended beyond Judea.¹⁹ In view of this connection, it is difficult to deny that the theology of Stephen was central to the theology of Luke as he composed Acts.

On Joseph

Stephen's careful selection continues in the Joseph section with the omission of the Isaac and Jacob stories found in his sources and with the condensation of the eleven chapters of the Genesis account of Joseph into roughly eight verses. The key phrase to be considered thematically is found in verses 9-10a: "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles." The earlier motif of God as transcending location is thus reiterated in the Joseph story.²⁰ It is even possible that a slight polemical jab is here thrust at Stephen's auditors who, like the brothers of Joseph, were still in the land but were without God, disobedient, and suffering.²¹

¹⁸Bruce captures this flavor well (*Acts*, 145): "It was in Mesopotamia, far from the promised land, that God first revealed Himself to Abraham. . . . Those who are obedient to the heavenly vision, Stephen seems to suggest, will always live loose to any one spot on earth, will always be ready to get out and go wherever God may guide." Cf. also Longenecker, *Acts*, 339; and Rauch, "Stephanus," 363-64.

¹⁹In this connection see the fine summary by J. Julius Scott, "Stephen's Defense and the World Mission of the People of God," *JETS* 21 (1978) 131-41.

²⁰Richard ("Acts 7," 260) states the following in this regard: The Joseph section "emphasizes once more that the events of salvation history for the most part occur outside of Judaea." This commonality with the Abraham section had been noted earlier by B. Heather: "But there underlies this section [7:2-16], I think a suggestion that God was truly God, and the Hebrews were truly His people, long before Moses or his Law; with the immediate implication that the Mosaic legislation had no more than a relative value" ("Early Christian Homiletics: St. Stephen's Defence [Acts 7:2-53]," *Australasian Catholic Record* 5 [1959] 238).

²¹Richard, "Acts 7," 260-61.

It is in this section that a second theological motif arises, one that is to reappear in the final invective (vv 51–53). That motif is the exaltation of the rejected one as deliverer of the rejectors.²² It is this particular motif that serves as Stephen's means of both putting his interrogators on the defensive as well as proclaiming Christ from the Scriptures: Joseph, like Christ, was rejected by his brothers. This section, then, develops an offensive element in Stephen's "defense" as well, an element that will continue in the succeeding sections.

On Moses

As in the Joseph unit, Stephen has again selectively styled the Moses material with a theological point in mind. Both the "God outside the land" motif as well as the "rejected deliverer" motif find their places here.

The former begins in the introductory sentences, where Stephen emphasizes the Egyptian location of the people (vv 17, 18, 22). The implication is that since the place from which Israel was delivered was Egypt, then obviously the God who delivered them cannot be restricted by national boundaries. This is emphasized even further by the following notations: It was in *Midian* that the divine oracle to Moses took place (v 29); and the divine workings were seen when God "did wonders and miraculous signs in *Egypt*, at the *Red Sea*, and for forty years in the *desert*" (v 36).²³

The point is that if the land and the Temple are required for the presence of God among his people, then the fundamental historical/theological roots of Israel as a nation must be excluded. Stephen's initial motif is thus strengthened by his selection of details from Moses' life. Yet it is the second motif, introduced in the Joseph section, that finds an even stronger emphasis.

The "rejected deliverer" motif finds its furtherance here in the recounting of the story about Moses and the oppressive Egyptian

²²Although this typological motif finds its detractors, there is a trend toward reasserting its legitimate existence in Stephen's speech. Earlier writers favoring this approach include Paton J. Gloag, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1979 reprint of 1870 ed.), I, 237; and R. B. Rackham, *Acts*, 103. More recently this has been promoted by C. S. C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964) 105–6; and F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, 148. The most thorough treatment of this Joseph "typology" is found in Kilgallen (*Stephen's Speech*, 49–60), who sees the determining factor here in the distinctly Christian terms used in this section.

²³Maurice Carrez sees an even greater emphasis on this theme in the Moses section ("Présence et Fonctionnement de L'Ancien Testament dans L'Annonce de L'Évangile," *RSR* 63 [1975] 333). See also Célestin Charlier, "Le Manifeste D'Étienne (Actes 7)," *BVC* 3 (1953) 87; and Longenecker, *Acts*, 344.

(vv 23–29). The sacred lawgiver, Stephen recounts, “thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not” (v 25). Similar to the Joseph episode, a polemical jab is thrust at the unresponsive people who were to have received the deliverance. They, in fact, refused deliverance by refusing the deliverer. It is the one the people rejected, says Stephen, that God used to save them: “This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the word, ‘who made you ruler and judge?’ He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush” (v 35).²⁴

It was, in fact, the rejection of Moses that led ultimately to a rejection of God himself in the golden calf incident (vv 40–41) and, even further, in their idolatry throughout the desert wandering period (vv 42–43). In the midst of his extensive treatment of Moses, Stephen gives an anticipatory glance at his final application (vv 51–53) by quoting a well-known messianic passage, Deut 18:15: “This is that Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.’”²⁵

In Stephen’s treatment of the Moses episode, then, we find a further development of the “God outside the land” motif as well as an amplification of the “rejected deliverer” motif. The Moses story, like the Abraham and Joseph stories, is selected and arranged to demonstrate a theological point for Stephen’s auditors. Jesus of Nazareth, like Joseph and Moses, is the rejected deliverer sent by God. It would be difficult indeed to find this theological concept to be at variance with the theology of Luke in his development of thought in Luke-Acts.

On the Temple

Although the Temple issue has been implicitly addressed from the outset in the “God outside the land” motif, it receives explicit development in this final section preceding the concluding remarks (7:44–50). The precursor of the Temple, the “Tabernacle of Testimony,” is treated initially in this section, and in a genuinely positive light. The Tabernacle has been made in accord with a divine design and through a divine revelation to Moses (v 44). The Tabernacle

²⁴In this connection note the polemical use of the following phrases in this section: “Our fathers *refused* to obey him”; and “they *rejected* him” (v 39).

²⁵J. Jeremias, “Μωϋσῆς,” *TDNT* 4 (1967) 868–69. Cf. Kirsopp Lake and H. J. Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 4 of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (reprint of the 1933 ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965) 38, 78; Rackham, *Acts*, 104; Gloag, *Acts*, 1. 236–47; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (second ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 172; *Acts*, 152.

again suits Stephen's "God outside the land" concept, being a portable structure not bound to one place. The Tabernacle, in fact, is carried into the land from outside. It continued to be functional in the land until the time of David. Then, in Stephen's discussion of the time of David, the Temple is finally introduced. Here, however, the tone of the discussion shifts dramatically: "But it was Solomon who built the house for him. However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men" (vv 47-48). Stephen forcefully emphasizes his point by a quotation of Isa 66:1-2, in which Yahweh stresses his omnipresence in contrast to the Temple. It is certainly to be observed that Stephen is minimizing the place of the Temple by such statements, particularly in contrast to the Tabernacle. God is not located only in Palestine, as Stephen has been stressing prior to this climactic assertion. Since this is the case, then the Temple cannot at all be perceived as the sole focal point for the worship of such a God.²⁶ With this, the "God outside the land" motif reaches its climax.

Direct Application

The direct application section is demarcated by a shift from the use of a third person narrative form to a second person confrontation. Stephen is no longer summarizing sacred history. He is now addressing his auditors directly in the light of his oration (vv 51-53). He accuses them of resisting the Holy Spirit (viz., God). Just as Joseph's brothers had rejected Joseph, their divinely designated

²⁶The building of the Temple as a point of idolatry or apostasy and thus as contrary to the intentions of God is viewed by most recent interpreters as Stephen's point here. See particularly Marcel Simon, "Saint Stephen and the Jerusalem Temple," *JEH* 2 (1951) 127-42; L. W. Barnard, "Saint Stephen and early Alexandrian Christianity," *NTS* 7 (1960-61) 31-45; Bihler, *Stephanusgeschichte*, 74-75; Bacon, "Stephen's Speech," 272; Longenecker, *Acts*, 346. Even Bruce adopts this position in his most recent work on the subject, emphasizing the unique assertion of Stephen as a Hellenist: "the idea that the Temple was a mistake from the beginning is unparalleled in the New Testament." He does try to divest Luke of such an opinion, however: "Stephen's reply is not the epitome of Luke's own position: Luke, in other parts of his work, reveals a much more positive attitude to the Temple than Stephen does." F. F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James, and John: Studies in Early Non-Pauline Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 53. It must be kept in mind, however, that OT theology places the impetus for the building of the Temple with Yahweh himself, who gave explicit instructions for its design, just as he did for the Tabernacle (1 Chr 28:12, 19). To suggest that Stephen viewed the construction of the Temple as an act of apostasy or idolatry is to suggest that he either misunderstood or misrepresented OT theology at this point. The older interpreters understood Stephen's words in a less stinging sense, holding that he spoke against the current view of the Temple and its use rather than its existence. Cf. Heather, "St. Stephen's Defence," 240: "The Temple, then, like the law, had a relative, not an absolute value." See also Ephraim C. Sheld, "Stephen's Defence before the Sanhedrin," *BW* 13 (January-June 1899) 98.

deliverer, so they have rejected the Righteous One. Just as Israel rejected Moses, their divinely designated deliverer, so they have rejected, betrayed, and murdered the Savior. Thus the "rejected deliverer" motif is brought to a climax in this final section.

In view of the foregoing, it can be seen that Stephen has met the accusations by utilizing the Torah selectively to defend his position on the nature of Israel's God as well as to show his hearers their guilt in rejecting God's Deliverer, Jesus. Stephen's defense becomes his means of offense. His accusers become his accused.

THE "ERRORS" AND STEPHEN'S THEOLOGY

Now that the theology of Stephen has been established in terms of its connection to the speech's thematic development and flow of thought, it remains to be seen where the problematic passages lie in relation to this theological development. Of the five conflicts of a historical nature in the speech, two are contained in the Abraham section, and three in the Joseph section. The relation of the three explicit problems to the theology of the speech will now be considered.²⁷

The Call of Abraham

The first phrase causing difficulty is that which locates the initial revelation to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) "in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran" (7:2). It has been seen that the point of the Abrahamic story in the Stephen speech is to initiate the concept that Yahweh's presence is not limited to the land on which the Temple lies. Certainly this point could have been made without the limiting phrase "before he lived in Haran." Yet the fact that this foundational revelation took place in Mesopotamia, "the land of the Chaldeans" (7:4), appears to have theological significance for Stephen. To him, it is not simply at Haran, the second stage of the patriarchal sojourn, where the divine oracle overtook Abraham. Rather, it was in the very seedbed of idolatry, the farthest point from the land, and at the very dawn of redemptive history that the divine oracle reached him.²⁸ J. Kilgallen, although not necessarily assuming a non-conflicting Genesis account, expresses this same kind of idea:

²⁷The numeric problem of 70/75 will not be treated under this heading as a theological alteration, since this issue has a textual problem at its base, nor will the patristic burial issue be treated in that it involves in its solution a textual-grammatical matter rather than a theological one. See Koivisto, "Stephen's Speech and Inerrancy," chaps. 4-5.

²⁸Cf. Jacquier, *Actes*, 295.

Theologically, we believe that Stephen chose this tradition (Gen. 15, 7) rather than that of 11, 31–12, 5 because he wanted to show his listeners that the call to a new land (to worship God) was at the very root of Abraham's earliest migration. God's call did not come after a first and secular movement of Abraham. Abraham's initial movement was in response to a divine mandate; conversely, any movement that tended toward the new land was inspired by God, not simply capitalized upon by God somewhere along the journey (as the Gen 12 tradition might indicate). The divine plan was primordial.²⁹

The point is well taken. Stephen's reference to a Chaldean call is not a homiletical slip or inadvertent error brought about by the pressures of litigation. It is, on the contrary, a deliberate attempt to develop his theology by selecting materials from the biblical text.³⁰ As such, the reference to the Abrahamic call in Ur is conscious and planned; it is an integral part of the theology that Stephen is presenting and that Luke is integrating with his theological development in the book of Acts.

The Death of Terah

At first glance, the reference to Terah's death in Acts 7:4 seems to contain no theological significance, but is rather a simple allusion to an apparent historical fact in Genesis: the call of Abraham is recorded as occurring subsequent to Terah's death. Strack and Billerbeck suggest that the reason for the intrusion of this problematic phrase in Acts 7 is a simple reliance on an old rabbinic tradition that was created to absolve Abraham from the atrocious action of deserting his aged father.³¹

²⁹Kilgallen, *Stephen's Speech*, 42–43. See also Nils A. Dahl, "The Story of Abraham in Luke-Acts," *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966) 143: "Thus God's revelation is made the starting point of Abraham's migrations."

³⁰E. Richard, though attributing the redactive work to the Lucan author, stresses that the changes in the Stephen speech are not accidental, but are related to the "overall purpose of the speech and its context." *Acts 6:1–8:4: The Author's Method of Composition* (SBL Dissertation Series, 41; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) 56.

³¹Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (6 vols.; Munich: C. H. Beck'sche, 1961) 2. 667–68. See particularly the rabbinic tradition reflected in *Gen. Rab.* 39:7: "Now what precedes this passage? *And Terah died in Haran* [which is followed by] Now the Lord said unto Abram: Get thee (lek leka). R. Isaac said: From the point of view of chronology a period of sixty-five years is still required. But first you may learn that the wicked, even during their lifetime, are called dead. For Abraham was afraid saying, 'Shall I go out and bring dishonor upon the Divine Name, as people will say, "he left his father in his old age and departed"?' Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, reassured him: 'I exempt thee (leka) from the

This suggestion may be too simple, however. In view of the obvious apologetic activity of Stephen, the phrase may well have been introduced for a distinct theological purpose. It is certainly possible that the reason for this inclusion is the relationship between Jewish tradition surrounding Terah and a subsidiary "exodus" motif that arises in the speech.

The Jewish tradition regarding Terah is exemplified in *Gen. Rab.* 38:13, where Terah is referred to as a manufacturer of idols, and it is held that the death of his son Haran was due to Terah's practice.³² The implication in the tradition is that, even though Abraham left Ur at the divine call, he brought with him an idolatrous father—and thereby a potential return to Chaldean idolatry.

The text of Acts 7 implies, moreover, that the stay in Haran was itself divinely directed.³³ In this way Stephen stresses that Abraham did not enter the land of promise until his idolatrous father was dead and hence unable to contaminate his pure devotion to Yahweh. For Stephen, the death of Terah may thus mark Abraham's final break with his past.³⁴

This emphasis on Abraham's break with his father is significant in view of a subsidiary "exodus" motif that may be seen in the Stephen speech. In the Joseph section (vv 9–16), Joseph (like Abraham) is separated from his family. The text indicates, however, that God was with *Joseph* as opposed to the "fathers." In the Moses section, it was "our fathers" who refused to obey Moses and turned

duty of honouring thy parents, though I exempt no one else from this duty. Moreover, I will record his death before thy departure.' Hence, '*And Terah died in Haran*' is stated first, and then, Now the LORD said unto Abram, etc."

³²The tradition probably has its roots in the canonical statement of Josh 24:2: "Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and *worshipped other gods*." A similar reflection of the tradition stemming from this may be found in *Jub.* 12:1–6, where Abram is said to have confronted his father on the uselessness of idolatry before leaving Ur, and where his brother Haran is to have died trying to save his idols from a conflagration set by Abram for the purpose of destroying them.

³³In 7:3 the words "Go into the land I will show you" are immediately followed by "then he settled in Haran." This implies that the otherwise inexplicable stopover in Haran was done at Yahweh's command. Abraham may well have waited there for the idolatrous tendencies in his own family to be resolved before entering the land of promise.

³⁴This is contrary to the opinion of Vawter. He holds that the priestly author of Genesis 11–12 intended to indicate that Terah was very much alive during the first years of Abram in Canaan, thus making the separation of the two ways all the more real since both leaving and staying would have been live options for Abraham (Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977], 173–74). Vawter does not consider the possibility, however, that the listing of Terah's sons may have been theological in order rather than chronological.

their hearts back to Egypt (v 39). The patriarchal distinction is brought to a pointed conclusion with the final words of Stephen: "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like *your fathers*: You always resist the Holy Spirit!" (v 51).

These internal factors suggest that the reference to the death of Terah may begin a foil against which the disobedience of Stephen's own contemporaries is brought into sharp relief. Abraham broke with his disobedient father at his death; Stephen's contemporaries had not yet broken with their disobedient and long-dead fathers.

This "error" thus shows marks of a calculated insertion into the narrative for theological purposes as well. Like the call of Abraham in Stephen's speech, the problem cannot simply be removed without violating the theology which Stephen is building, and which Luke condones.

The Abrahamic Purchase

Both a theological point and an exegetical difficulty are involved in Stephen's inclusion of an otherwise unknown acquisition by Abraham of land at Shechem. Shechem certainly held theological significance in the Abrahamic narrative of the OT, for it was there that Abraham first exhibited his relationship to the land of promise by building an altar to Yahweh.³⁵ A reference to an Abrahamic tomb purchase, however, would have most likely brought to the minds of Stephen's listeners the sacred and revered tomb at Hebron. Stephen asserts that Abraham purchased a tomb not at revered Hebron, but at despised Shechem.

Certainly this reference to what was Samaritan territory in Stephen's day, particularly in the context of the Temple and worship motifs in his speech, would have had significant theological overtones,³⁶ especially since the Samaritans were for all practical purposes considered outside the land.³⁷ It is thus not without significance that

³⁵ Martin H. Scharlemann, *Stephen: A Singular Saint (AnBib 34)* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1968) 38.

³⁶ Cf. E. F. Harrison: "Stephen's mention of Shechem was probably not casual but deliberate. . . . A rigid Jew might want to forget the patriarchal contacts with Shechem, but Stephen would not permit that. To mention Shechem was almost the equivalent of calling attention to Samaria" (*Acts*, 115-16). See also Bacon, "Stephen's Speech," 230. For a contrary opinion, see Loisy, *Actes*, 327. Loisy's objection to a polemic here, however, assumes that the only Abrahamic tomb purchase known to the Jews was the Hittite transaction of Genesis 23. With the abundance of extrabiblical accounts and traditions of Abraham circulating in the first century, this may be too great an assumption.

³⁷ Cf. Gerhard Schneider ("Stephanus, die Hellenisten, und Samaria," in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Tradition, Rédaction, Théologie*, ed. by J. Kremer [Louvain: Paris Gembloux, 1979] 229). Note particularly the "God is spirit" concept communicated to

Luke follows this speech with a narrative of the evangelization of that same Samaritan territory (Acts 8:4–25). In view of the conscious theological selection of the term “Shechem” on Stephen’s part, and the significant Lucan use of this element in his narrative, one must again conclude that the use of this “error” is a conscious one loaded with theological import.³⁸

CONCLUSION

The theological function of the “errors” within the development of Acts 7 indicates that at least three of the divergences are intentional assertions that produce in their contexts a theological thrust that would be absent without them. And though a systematic reconciliation between Stephen’s recounting of history and the OT record itself has not been attempted in this study, such an approach must reckon with the conclusion drawn here: that the divergences found in Stephen’s speech and recorded by Luke are deliberate. Hence, there is a renewed need to reconcile Stephen’s comments on OT history with the OT record. Allowing Stephen to have been “in error” simply will not do if a sound view of the trustworthiness of Scripture is to be maintained.

the Samaritans by our Lord (John 4:24). The possible connection between the Johannine theology thus represented and the Hellenistic concept represented by Stephen is shown by Oscar Cullmann, “A New Approach to the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel,” Parts I and II, *ET* 71 (1959) 8–12; 39–43.

³⁸This may explain why Shechem has a part in the theological focus, but it does not explain why Abraham was the one who needed to have made the purchase, nor why a tomb purchase is significant in the narrative at all. The role of a tomb in OT theology, however, may relate here to the concept of promise. Abraham’s purchase of a tomb plot in Hebron, for example, was evidence of his settling down in the land of promise. In the same way the patriarchal burials in Shechem, not mentioned by Stephen, are further examples of fulfillment in the land of promise. This fits Stephen’s theology quite well in that it is the rejected brother who ensures burial of the rejectors in the land of promise. The mention of Abraham as the purchaser forms a nice literary inclusion: “Abraham began this history, receiving the promise of the land, at v. 16, before the new generation of Exodus and the Pharaoh ‘who knew not Joseph’ appear. We see a literary, redactional nicety which gives a partial fulfillment to what God had promised Israel in the person of Abraham which in turn becomes an encouragement to hope for the future that some day all the land will pass into total possession of Abraham’s descendants” (Kilgallen, *Stephen’s Speech*, 62).

A COMPUTER AID FOR TEXTUAL CRITICISM

JAMES D. PRICE

Several basic principles of NT textual criticism have been employed in designing a computer program that groups manuscripts into probable genealogical relationships, constructs a resulting genealogical tree diagram, and identifies the statistically most likely reading of a text. The program has been initially applied to the books of Philippians, 1 Timothy, and Jude using the variants listed in UBSGNT². The results indicate that the program has potential as an aid to NT textual criticism.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

THE use of computers in biblical studies is viewed by many with considerable skepticism. Computer studies in literary criticism have led some scholars to reject Pauline authorship of certain epistles,¹ and others to reject the traditional authorship of portions of some OT books.² These studies are based on debatable presuppositions and methodology, the criticism of which is beyond the scope of this work. Such use of computers to provide mathematical proof or disproof of authorship led Bonifatius Fischer to question whether this was "charlatanry or scholarship."³

However, after discussing many limitations of the use of computers in biblical studies, Fischer wrote favorably of their use in the field of textual criticism:

¹A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman, *Christianity and the Computer* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964); and *Paul, the Man and the Myth* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); for further examples see J. R. Moore, "Computer Analysis and the Pauline Corpus," *BSac* 130 (1973) 41-49.

²Y. T. Radday and D. Wickmann, "Unity of Zechariah Examined in the Light of Statistical Linguistics," *ZAW* 87 (1975) 30-55.

³B. Fischer, "The Use of Computers in New Testament Studies, with Special Reference to Textual Criticism," *JTS* 21 (1970) 297-308.

After so much pessimism we come at last to a field where the computer is of great importance to the student of the New Testament, indeed where it opens up a new dimension and makes possible what hitherto the scholar had not even dared to dream of: that is, in textual criticism.⁴

PROPER THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Fischer further discussed the importance of proper theory and methodology in creating a computer program as an aid for textual criticism, and the vanity of expecting a computer to reconstruct the exact history of a text and its manuscript copies. However, he concluded that the manuscript relationships that could be discovered through the use of a computer would be of great value to the textual critic in reconstructing the transmissional history of a text. He visualized two stages in the process—a mathematical stage and an evaluative stage:

Two stages must be distinguished. In the first the relations between the manuscripts and the texts are defined on the basis of all their readings, irrespective of whether these readings are true or false: this stage is a purely mathematical process which can be done by a computer—indeed in so complicated a case as the New Testament it should be done by a computer. Then follows the second stage, the proper task of the textual critic, the judgment of the truth or falsity of the readings, the recension of the original text and perhaps also of its more important subsequent forms, and the reconstruction of the history of its transmission. This is a task that only a man can perform: it is beyond the capacities of a computer. But it rests on the firm basis that the computer supplies.⁵

COMPUTERS AND THEORIES OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Several studies have been made of various theories that might be suitable for computer application to NT textual criticism. G. P. Zarri studied the *stemmaata codicum* theories of Don H. Quentin.⁶ After expressing skepticism about expecting quick solutions, he concluded that Quentin's theories may help to clear up some difficult problems.

John G. Griffith experimented with the method of R. R. Sokal, known as numerical taxonomy,⁷ which Sokal used in arranging biological classes into family trees. Griffith adapted the methodology to

⁴Ibid., 304.

⁵Ibid., 306.

⁶G. P. Zarri, "Algorithms, *Stemmaata Codicum* and the Theories of Don H. Quentin," in *The Computer and Literary Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1973) 225-37.

⁷J. G. Griffith, "Numerical Taxonomy and Some Primary Manuscripts of the Gospels," *JTS* 20 (1969) 389-406.

textual criticism and experienced some success in classifying a number of the biblical manuscripts into near-neighbor clusters that approximate family tree relations. He concluded that this method achieved "a sorting of material which proves refractory to the conventional logic of the stemma. It can be tested quantitatively in a way that the stemma cannot, and does not beg any questions about the merits of the material being handled."⁸

W. Ott experimented with a matrix containing percentages of agreement among the manuscripts.⁹ The percentage of agreement was a test of close relationship—the closer the agreement, the closer the relationship. The method succeeded in revealing some group relationships among manuscripts.

Extensive research has been conducted at the Claremont Graduate School to develop a method for classifying Greek manuscripts into genealogical groups. This method, known as the Claremont Profile Method, makes use of a selected set of readings that define a unique profile for each of several manuscript groups. Each manuscript is then classified into one of these groups by means of its level of agreement with the profile of the group. This sampling method is being used to prepare a new comprehensive apparatus for the NT. Most of the work has been done manually, but recently W. L. Richards used a computer to assist the classification of manuscripts for the Johannine epistles.¹⁰

Kurt Aland and his associates at the Münster Institute have developed the Münster Fragment Identification Program which employs a computer to piece together papyrus fragments, to collate the readings of many manuscripts,¹¹ and to define manuscript groups and large manuscript complexes.¹²

⁸Ibid., 405.

⁹W. Ott, "Computer Applications in Textual Criticism," in *The Computer and Literary Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1973), 199–223.

¹⁰W. L. Richards, *The Classification of the Greek Manuscripts of the Johannine Epistles* (SBLDS 35; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977); E. J. Epp, "The Claremont Profile-Method for Grouping New Testament Minuscule Manuscripts," in *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament*, eds. B. L. Daniels and M. J. Suggs, vol. 29 of *Studies and Documents* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1967) 27–38; E. C. Colwell et al., "The International Greek New Testament Project: A Status Report," *JBL* 87 (1968) 187–97; P. McReynolds, "The Value and Limitations of the Claremont Profile Method," in *Society of Biblical Literature, Book of Seminar Papers* (Sept. 1972) 1.1–7; F. Wisse, *The Profile Method for the Classification and Evaluation of Manuscript Evidence, as Applied to the Continuous Greek Text of the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); W. L. Richards, "A Critique of a New Testament Text-Critical Methodology—The Claremont Profile Method," *JBL* 96 (1977) 555–56.

¹¹E. J. Epp, "A Continuing Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism," *HTR* 73 (1980) 133–34.

¹²Ibid., 142.

Although these methods have mapped general genealogical relationships among manuscripts, none has succeeded in producing specific genealogical tree diagrams of manuscript history. It is widely held that the task is too complex, the manuscripts are of mixed parentage, and the genealogical history of biblical texts is beyond recovery.

A NEW COMPUTER METHOD

For several years I have experimented with computer techniques for reconstructing the genealogical history of a NT text by using the variant readings and dates of the extant manuscripts. The research has resulted in a computer program that groups manuscripts into probable genealogical relationships, constructs a resulting genealogical tree diagram of an approximate textual history, and identifies the most likely readings of the original text based upon this reconstruction. For numerous test problems, the program has yielded results similar to those that have been obtained through conventional means. The problems approximate the complexity and difficulty of the biblical text. The program provides good solutions when the textual evidence is statistically adequate; it provides a good approximation when the evidence is sparse. If the manuscript shows signs of mixed parentage, it indicates so; if they appear to have no genealogical relationships, it indicates so; and if they exhibit the relationships defined by Zane Hodges's textual model,¹³ it indicates so.

The program is designed as a research aid for the textual scholar. At key points in the computing process, the program displays the results of its decisions, the statistical validity of the decisions, the source of the data, and the specific rules employed to reach the decision. In case the decision is statistically weak, or otherwise questionable, the scholar may interact with the program to improve its performance by human insight. Experience has revealed that this interaction is needed, but not often. As Fischer predicted, the results of the computer analysis must be evaluated, edited, and optimized; but the final result is indeed a probable reconstruction of the genealogical history of the text.

¹³Hodges's textual model is understood to view all manuscripts as primary witnesses to the text of the original autograph, and to view them as exhibiting essentially no genealogical relationships among themselves. That is, at any place in the text where a variant reading occurs, the majority of manuscripts contain the reading of the autograph, and the non-original readings are genealogically random (see Z. C. Hodges, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Response," *JETS* 21 [1978] 143-56). However, in his later work Hodges acknowledges the existence and importance of genealogical relationships and advocates the necessity of studying the genealogical history of every book in the NT (see Z. C. Hodges and A. L. Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982]).

BASIC PRINCIPLES

As a result of my experimental research, several basic principles have been developed for reconstructing the genealogical history of a text. Most of the principles are self-evident upon examination.

Each Book Is Independent

Because the early history of each biblical book was different, each book should be studied independently. Failure to do this could result in unnecessary confusion.

Each Manuscript Is a Copy or a Recension

Each manuscript is a copy of its exemplar (usually containing all of the variants of the exemplar) or a recension. Recensions are determined by evidence of two or more parents. Therefore, a manuscript bears witness to a *set* of variants, not simply to individual variants. Viewing the data of the manuscripts as sets of variants reduces confusion. The manuscripts are regarded as having a type of genetic profile that bears witness to its genealogical descent. This agrees in principle with the Claremont view, and disagrees with Aland who seems to regard each variant as having an independent genealogical history.

Fathers and Versions Used

The quotations of a church father are evidence for the Greek text used by him. Where the evidence is sufficiently complete, the set of variants supported by a church father may be treated as a Greek manuscript.¹⁴ The same is true for the ancient versions. It may be assumed that each version was translated from a single Greek manuscript containing the variants supported by the version. The scholar must take this into account when interacting with the decisions of the program, recognizing the uncertainties associated with patristic quotations and translations.

Primary Witness Takes Priority

A manuscript bears primary witness to the readings of its immediate parent exemplar, and secondary witness to more remote ancestors and relatives. The computing procedure should make use of primary witnesses throughout, and should use the primary witness of each manuscript to define its place in the genealogical tree.

¹⁴It is recognized that some church fathers quoted from more than one ancient text. Although the procedure is complicated, the program usually can differentiate multiple ancient texts of this kind.

Similarity Defines Siblings

A small group of manuscripts more like one another than those outside the group may be assumed to be immediate sibling descendants of a common parent exemplar. Such a group exhibits a high percentage of agreement and has one or more readings unique to itself. Siblings bear primary witness to the readings of their parent exemplar and may be used to identify the parent. A large set of manuscripts that are genealogical descendants of a common original text may be expected to have numerous small groups of siblings (or near siblings) of this type. When a set of manuscripts fails to exhibit this condition, the manuscripts are of hopelessly mixed parentage or not genealogically related.

How Exemplars Are Identified

Sibling descendants bear primary witness to the readings of their immediate parent exemplar. Within a sibling group, majority vote usually identifies the parent readings. When majority vote fails for a given variant, then near relatives—such as uncles or cousins¹⁵—usually share the parent reading and may resolve the uncertainty. When this fails, any unique reading may be eliminated; it will lack confirmation by any witness outside the group. When all these fail to determine the most likely reading, the scholar may resolve the uncertainty by internal evidence. In any case, the scholar may overrule the computer's decision on the basis of evidence not available to the computer.

Exemplars More Authoritative

Once a parent exemplar is identified it replaces the witness of its descendants, being the authority that accounts for their existence. If an exemplar so identified is extant, it is allowed to bear further witness to its own immediate parent. If the exemplar so identified is not extant, the program creates the exemplar and allows it to bear witness in place of its descendants; its existence is justified by the witness of its descendants, although some uncertainty may be introduced for readings with weak support.

Iteration Required

An ordered iteration of these principles produces a tree diagram of the genealogical relationships among the manuscripts traced back

¹⁵A near relative is a manuscript outside the sibling group, but more like the group than any other manuscript in the data base.

to one common ancestor. The resultant tree diagram represents an approximation of the genealogical history of the text. The tree diagram must be studied, optimized, and interpreted by textual scholars. The final result is a reconstruction of the history of the text and a list of the most likely readings of the autograph, together with the statistical probability for each reading.

INITIAL RESULTS

To date, the program has been applied to three small books of the NT,¹⁶ making use of the textual data available in the *UBSGNT*.¹⁷ Figures 1, 2, and 3 are slightly simplified diagrams of the preliminary reconstruction of the textual history of the books.¹⁸ The results have been what would be expected, indicating the validity of the program's logic.

Simple Descent Confirmed

Most manuscripts were found to exhibit simple descent from only one parent exemplar. A few were found to descend from two parents, a still smaller number from three or more; few if any were of hopelessly mixed parentage. Table 1 summarizes the manuscript parentage for the three books. Genealogical descent was found to be consistent with historic chronology—late manuscripts exhibited descent from earlier ones (occasionally a late manuscript exhibited descent from a very early one);¹⁹ early manuscripts fit into the early branches of the tree diagram, and late manuscripts fit into late branches. Although the computer program makes use of the date of the manuscripts, it has no logical mechanism that predetermines chronological consistency in the genealogical tree diagram. This chronological consistency would not be expected if the genealogical groupings found by the computer had no correspondence with the

¹⁶Philippians, 1 Timothy, and Jude.

¹⁷The UBS text was selected because it lists more manuscripts in its apparatus than others. This advantage was offset somewhat by the smaller number of variants. Better results are expected from a more complete set of data.

¹⁸A complete textual commentary on these books based on the computer analysis of the data in the *UBSGNT* will be produced at a later date.

¹⁹For example in Philippians, mss 81 and 1241 appear to descend from an early form of the Alexandrian text; group 330, 451, 1962, 2127, and 2492 appears to descend from another early form of the Alexandrian text; group D^c, 326, and 1877 appears to descend from an early form of the Antiochan text; and ms Ψ appears to descend from an early form of the Western text. In 1 Timothy, group 81, 1739, and 1881 appears to descend from an early form of the Alexandrian text; and group Ψ, 104, 330, 451, 1877, and 2492 appears to descend from an early form of the Antiochan text. In Jude, group A, 81, and 1739 appears to descend from a very early form of the Alexandrian text.

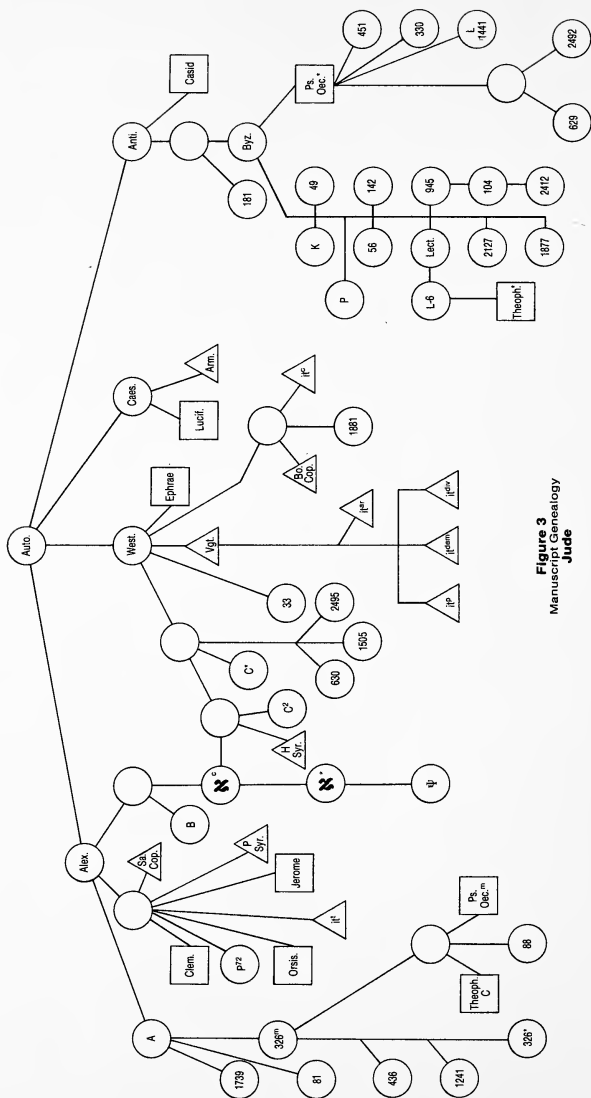


Figure 3
Manuscript Genealogy
Jude

TABLE 1

*Summary of Parentage**

<i>Book</i>	<i>1 Parent</i>	<i>2 Parents</i>	<i>3 or More</i>	<i>Total</i>
Philippians	51 MSS	12 MSS	7 MSS	70 MSS
1 Timothy	61 MSS	4 MSS	1 MSS	66 MSS
Jude	34 MSS	15 MSS	0 MSS	49 MSS
Total	146 MSS	31 MSS	8 MSS	185 MSS
% of total	78.9%	16.7%	4.4%	100.0%

*Data include only extant MSS, not created exemplars.

TABLE 2

*Summary of Text Degradation**

<i>Book</i>	<i>Number of variants introduced by a MS</i>					<i>Total</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>More</i>	
Philippians	25	34	18	12	8	97
1 Timothy	42	34	11	1	1	89
Jude	38	30	6	2	0	76
Total	105	98	35	15	9	262
% of total	40.1%	37.4%	13.3%	5.7%	3.5%	100.0%

*Data include extant MSS and created exemplars.

history of the text. If the genealogical groupings were unrelated to history, one would expect the distribution of the manuscripts in the genealogical tree to be chronologically random rather than ordered. Therefore, the existence of chronological consistency in the genealogical tree diagrams produced by the computer suggests the validity of the program's logic.

Simple Degradation Confirmed

Most variants were found to be introduced simply, that is, only once, and only one or two at a time. When a variant appeared again in another branch it was generally due to multiple parentage. When several variants arose in the same manuscript, it was usually due to a recension, an infrequent occurrence. Table 2 summarizes the text degradation as indicated by the number of variants introduced by the manuscripts. (A variant is understood here to mean a reading differing from that of the immediate parent exemplar.)

Text-types Confirmed

The reconstructed genealogical history confirmed four basic ancient text-types more like one another than like their own remote descendants: the Alexandrian,²⁰ the Western,²¹ the Antiochan,²² and a fourth that may correspond with the Caesarean.²³ Nothing in the logic of the program could have predetermined this reconstruction. Each text-type exhibits an early form with several subsequent branches.²⁴ The Antiochan text exhibits an early form that is related to the Syriac (though not in Jude) with several subsequent branches. The Byzantine text is located in one of the later branches. Nothing in the logic of the program could have predetermined this late secondary descent of the Byzantine text.

Ancient Versions

The ancient versions exhibit genealogical descent from Greek texts usually current in the locality of the version. The Vulgate was consistently from an early form of the Western text. There were several independent Old Latin versions, usually made from early forms of the Western text. A few Old Latin versions were non-Western; it^d was consistently Caesarean; it^{ar} was Caesarean in 1 Timothy; and it^t was Alexandrian in Jude. The Armenian version was consistently Caesarean. The Coptic and Ethiopic versions were consistently Alexandrian, except that the Boharic Coptic version was Western in Jude. On the other hand, the Syriac version appears to be Caesarean in Philippians, Antiochan in 1 Timothy, and Alexandrian in Jude. The Gothic version is Caesarean in 1 Timothy and Western in Philippians.

The Church Fathers

Not many church fathers offered sufficient evidence to identify their underlying Greek texts. Of those whose texts could be identified,

²⁰The Alexandrian text-type consistently included \aleph^* , \aleph^c , A, B, (C*), C², 81, Origen, Clement, Coptic (Sa), and Ethiopic. Ms \aleph^c was usually close to the earliest form.

²¹The Western text-type consistently included the Vg, it^c, it^{dem}, it^{div}, it^f, it^g, it^x, and it^z. A few Greek mss were classified in Western branches, but not consistently. The Vg was usually close to the earliest form.

²²The Antiochan text-type consistently included D^c, K, 181, 629, 1877, 1984, 1985, Byz, Lect, Theodoret, and John of Damascus. D^c and 181 were usually close to the early form of the Byzantine branch, whereas witnesses to the earliest form varied from book to book.

²³The Caesarean text-type consistently included the Armenian, it^d, and it^e; other witnesses varied from book to book.

²⁴The Western text appears to have mixed parentage for 1 Timothy.

TABLE 3

Number of Statistically Probable Readings

	<i>Philippians</i>	<i>1 Timothy</i>	<i>Jude</i>	<i>Total</i>
No. of variants	16	11	6	33
Alexandrian	14 (87.5%)	10 (90.9%)	6 (100.0%)	30 (90.9%)
Western	12 (75.0%)	9 (81.8%)	5 (83.3%)	26 (78.8%)
Caesarean	12 (75.0%)	9 (81.8%)	5 (83.3%)	26 (78.8%)
Antiochan	13 (81.2%)	10 (90.9%)	4 (66.6%)	27 (81.8%)

several consistently agreed with a local text, and some differed from book to book. Origen and Clement were consistently Alexandrian; Theodoret and John of Damascus were consistently Antiochan. Several had sufficient data to be used for only one of the three books studied. But it appears that the church fathers usually made use of a form of the text current in their locality.

Evidence of Recensions

If it is assumed that the earliest form of each ancient text-type was the result of a local recension, then this study suggests that the recensions were fairly successful in standardizing the text in each area. For the books covered in this study, the Alexandrian text-type is the most consistent, with statistically probable readings for 100% of the variants in Jude, 90.9% in 1 Timothy, and 87.5% in Philippians (for an overall average of 90.9%). The Antiochan text-type for the three books yielded statistically probable readings for 81.8% of the variants, whereas the percentage for the Western and Caesarean text-types was 78.8% (see table 3).

In addition, the study suggests that a few subsequent recensions were made, some of more consequence than others. One interesting occurrence of recensions appears to be associated with the rise of the versions. There seems to have been a recension made in preparation for the translation of some of the versions. For example, in Philippians and 1 Timothy, the Ethiopic and Coptic versions appear to have been made from recent recensions.²⁵ In Philippians, the Gothic

²⁵In 1 Timothy, the Coptic and Ethiopic were made from a mild recension of the earliest form of the Alexandrian text of which \aleph^c was a direct descendant. In Philippians, the Ethiopic and Boharic Coptic were made from texts close to the one used by Eusebius, of which ms 33 is a late copy. In fact, ms B³ appears to be a major recension of the same text, with six variants introduced by mixed parentage; B³ evidently was the recension made for translating the Sahidic Coptic, with B* as a copy of B³, differing in only one reading. This does not seem to be the case in other of the Pauline epistles.

version appears to have been made from a recension known to Chrysostom.²⁶

In Philippians and 1 Timothy, the Old Latin version it^s appears to be translated from a recension; MS G^c is near the text of this recension in Philippians²⁷ and related to it in a more complex way in 1 Timothy. A similar recensional background must account for the Old Latin it^d and it^e, its copy.²⁸

In all three books, the Armenian version, although clearly a descendant of the Caesarean text, exhibits evidence of being translated from a recension. Something similar must be true for the text behind the Syriac versions. In Philippians, the text is derived from the Caesarean; in 1 Timothy it is derived from the early Antiochan; and in Jude it is derived from the Alexandrian.

Recovering the Original Text

If it can be assumed that the earliest form of each ancient text-type was an independent witness to the original text, then their mutual agreement would provide convincing identification of original readings.²⁹ For each of the three books studied, the procedure reconstructed four ancient text-types more like one another than like their own remote descendants. For the thirty-three readings identified by the program to be most probably original in the three books studied, sixteen readings (48.5%) had the full support of all four ancient text-types; seven readings (21.2%) had the support of three against one; six readings (18.2%) had the support of two ancient text-types against one each supporting different readings; only four (12.1%) had the support of two ancient text-types against two supporting another. That is, 87.9% of the readings had good statistical support; only 12.1% had uncertainties that statistical analysis could not resolve.

The readings of the reconstructed original text frequently were those selected by the editors of *UBSGNT*²; but a number of them

²⁶The exemplar for the Gothic version was a descendant of an early form of the Western text, but it was of mixed parentage and introduced five variants. The text of Chrysostom differed from this recension in only two readings.

²⁷MS G^c is a descendant of an early form of the Western text; but it was of mixed parentage and introduced seven variants; the text of it^s differs from G^c in only three readings. MS G* is a copy of G^c.

²⁸In 1 Timothy ms D appears to be a recension bringing together two early forms of the Caesarean text; D seems to be the Greek text from which it^d was translated. However, D does not appear to be the text of it^d in Philippians, but rather the early form of the Caesarean text itself was the text of it^d.

²⁹This conclusion is limited by the uncertainties associated with reconstructing the text-types. Although the logic of the program employs primary witnesses and chooses readings with the greatest statistical probability, some degree of uncertainty accumulates in the reconstruction process. More needs to be known about how uncertainties accumulate.

were different.³⁰ More study and experience with the program are needed before its use may produce decisions more reliable than theirs.³¹

CONCLUSIONS

This computer program has provided some thought-provoking observations. Contrary to current opinion, it appears that the manuscripts of the Greek NT may really have simple genealogical relationships, and that the text may have experienced simple degradation. It appears that some reconstruction may be made of an approximate transmissional history of the text, using the computer program as a research tool in the hands of a textual scholar.

The present study was made using a limited number of manuscripts³² and a limited number of variants.³³ However, the manuscripts generally are regarded as the best representatives of the larger corpus.³⁴ With such a good representative sample to work with, it is reasonable to expect that the larger corpus of data will exhibit similar characteristics without much greater complexity. A recent computer study of the text of Romans with Richard Young has been completed. The data consists of 64 manuscripts and 91 variants. The larger number of variants made the solution a little more complex, but the results and conclusions were essentially the same.³⁵ This provides confidence that the results are not accounted for merely on the basis of overly simple problems. The computer is capable of handling much larger problems. It is expected that further study and research with the computer program will provide valuable insight into the history and text of the Greek NT.

³⁰For Jude, five out of six readings were in agreement with the critical editors; for Philippians it was eight out of sixteen; and for 1 Timothy, six out of eleven.

³¹See my forthcoming article, "A Textual Commentary on the Book of Philippians."

³²Philippians, seventy MSS; 1 Timothy, sixty-six MSS; Jude, forty-nine MSS.

³³Philippians, sixteen variants; 1 Timothy, eleven variants; Jude, six variants.

³⁴Some scholars doubt that the manuscripts in the *UBSGNT*² represent a good sample of the textual history. Our own study supports that conclusion for the book of Revelation.

³⁵A textual commentary on Romans based on this study will be produced at a later date.

SEVEN THEOLOGICAL THEMES IN HEBREWS

MERLAND RAY MILLER†

By examining the relationship of literary form to theological argument in the book of Hebrews, seven theological themes occurring throughout Hebrews are elucidated, each of which is especially prevalent in 11:1-12:2. This smaller section emerges as a theological microcosm of the book as a whole. Upon close inspection, these seven themes can be seen to function as a forceful appeal for the readers not to abandon the New Covenant community for the Old, but rather to endure in faith. The faith that brings such endurance is that which focuses on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith, who himself has endured the cross and has sat down at the right hand of God the Father.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

THE task of interpreting a passage of Scripture is a delicate balancing act. For the exegete who is sensitive to the literary forms of biblical literature and intent on finding the theological argument of a passage, there must be a third concern, that of demonstrating how the two interact. In the context of examining the relationship of literary form to theological argument in Hebrews,¹ seven theological themes were discovered. These themes, which occur throughout Hebrews (but with greater frequency in Heb 11:1-12:2), are (1) faith, (2) perfection, (3) promise, (4) endurance, (5) superiority, (6) witness, and (7) inheritance. The meanings of the Greek word groups associated with these themes are discussed briefly below. The emphasis, however, is on their development within Hebrews as a whole, and within the concluding exhortation (10:19-12:29) in particular.

¹The literary form of Heb 11:1-12:2 has been defined in chap. 1 of my unpublished dissertation, "The Theological Argument of Hebrews 11 in Light of Its Literary Form" (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1984) and in the article "What Is the Literary Form of Hebrews 11?", forthcoming in *JETS*. My thesis is that Heb 11:1-12:2 is an encomium to Jesus.

FAITH

The concept of 'faith' is not only central to Heb 11:1-12:2 (27×) and to the book of Hebrews as a whole (41×), but to the entire scope of biblical revelation. Therefore it is imperative to grasp the scriptural meaning of faith in order to understand how Hebrews employs it.

In extra-biblical Greek, this concept generally signifies "to trust, rely on." With a personal object it can acquire the nuance "to obey."²

In the LXX, the root πιστ- almost exclusively translates the root אָמַן.³ The best examples are found in Gen 15:6 and Hab 2:4. The Hebrew root occurs often in the Hiphil stem where, according to Weiser, it means "to declare God אָמַן," "to say Amen to God."⁴ Used in this sense, the word denotes a response to the consistency of God.

The importance of the OT for the writers of the NT leads to frequent use of this concept. The new meanings given to the concept in the NT are: acceptance of preaching (1 Thess 1:8-9); content of faith (Rom 10:9); personal relation to Christ (Gal 2:20); and the message itself (Gal 1:23). These meanings of faith are sufficiently differentiated from the OT meanings to warrant their being taken as "Christian" usages of the term.⁵

In the book of Hebrews, the concept πιστ-, like so many theological concepts in the book, serves the hortatory purpose of the author. It is closely related to the word of God (4:2, 3) and the promise of God (6:12; 10:23; 11:11). It is the major focus around which the OT history is presented, first with the unbelief of the desert generation (3:7-4:11), and later with the faith of the elders (chap. 11).

This hortatory use of faith has misled some into taking πίστις in Hebrews 11 to mean exhortation. The concept has been identified with obedience (Bultmann, Eichler⁶), hope (Huxhold⁷) and endurance (Graesser⁸; the word is ὑπομονή, also translated "steadfastness" or "perseverance").

The underlying problem with these hortatory definitions is that faith is conceived of as a virtue or human power. That Graesser sees

²Rudolf Bultmann and Artur Weiser, "πιστεύω," etc., *TDNT* 6 (1968) 176-79.

³Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)* (2 vols.; Graz-Austria: Akademische Druck-U. Verlagsanstalt, 1954), 2. 1137-38.

⁴Bultmann, "πίστις," 187.

⁵*Ibid.*, 205-14.

⁶Johannes Eichler, "Inheritance, Lot, Portion, κληρος," *NIDNTT* 2 (1976) 301.

⁷H. N. Huxhold, "Faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *CTM* 38 (1967).

⁸Erich Graesser, *Der Glaube im Hebraeerbrief* (Marburg: Elwert, 1965).

faith in Hebrews in this way is clearly illustrated by his contrast with Paul's use of the term:

With Paul, *generatio fidei* . . . whereby faith—when it has first of all been awakened through the Word—is then itself an “eschatological phenomenon,” that is, “that which conveys justification to men on the basis of δικαιοσύνη.” Here, with Hb, *cooperatio fidei*, whereby faith as instrument . . . is brought in by the hearer himself as the means, as the power, with the help of which he puts himself in a wholly settled position and perseveres in it.⁹

As a further contrast to Paul, Graesser contends that faith in Hebrews is not faith in Christ: “The specifically Christian (‘Christological’) faith finds no further development in Hb, neither in the reflective manner of the Apostle Paul, nor in the unreflective manner of the Synoptics.”¹⁰

One need look no further than Heb 12:2 and the call to “look to Jesus” to conclude that in Heb 11:1–12:2 faith is preeminently Christological. The whole “faith cycle” beginning at 10:32 leads up to the climactic identification of faith (the means of endurance) with “seeing the unseen,” that is, Jesus himself. Taking the book of Hebrews as a whole, it seems clear in light of the development of the teaching on the High Priestly ministry of Christ, and the strong exhortation to “enter God’s presence boldly” on the basis of that ministry (4:14–16; 10:19–25) that faith in Hebrews is pointedly Christological. If the phrase πίστις εἰς Χριστόν / ‘faith in Christ’ is not used in Hebrews, the idea is certainly implied throughout. Even where faith refers simply to God (6:1; 11:6), the background is the teaching of chap. 1, that Christ, in contrast to the angels, is God.

In developing the point that faith is a virtue provided by man, Graesser contrasts the view with that of Paul, which connects faith with the Word of God. But in Hebrews, as in Paul, the object of faith is the word of promise. First, by contrast, unbelief is the rejection of the word which is heard (4:1–3). Then, positively, faith focuses on the promise (6:12). Therefore, with the personal object (Christ) and the promise in mind it is best to understand faith in Hebrews (indeed, throughout Scripture as a whole) in the general sense of trust: “from a purely formal standpoint there is nothing very distinctive in the usage of the NT and early Chr. writings as compared with Gk. usage. As in Gk. . . . πιστεύειν means ‘to rely on’, ‘to trust’, ‘to believe’.”¹¹

⁹Ibid., 66; my translation.

¹⁰Ibid., 79.

¹¹Bultmann, “πίστις,” 203.

The connection of this trust with God's Word is aptly summed up by Gerhard Delling who, in another context (and almost in passing), speaks of "πίστις, which is firm confidence in the fulfillment of God's promise."¹²

In Heb 11:1-12:2 faith may be defined as an attitude of trust by which the believer sees the unseen and thereby sets his hope on the divine promise. The elders trusted that they would eventually be "brought to completion" and qualified to enter their heavenly fatherland, that is, the presence of God. They therefore anticipated the work of Christ as High Priest which would make that entrance possible for them. They "saw the unseen" both in terms of time (the future event of the cross) and of space (looking to heaven they considered themselves strangers on earth). Inasmuch as they looked to God, they also looked to Jesus who is the eternal God.

The believers to whom Hebrews is addressed live in the age of the New Covenant and the fulfillment of the promises. The event of the cross and the current ministry of Christ in intercession are the bases for confident entrance into God's presence in prayer. They live now, however, like the elders once did, on the earthly scene, where there is a great race to be run in order finally to reach the heavenly city. Their situation involves suffering, which calls for endurance. The key to enduring is faith, confident trust in God's promise that "He shall come and not delay" (10:37), looking to the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith to lead them on to their final perfection.

PERFECTION

The concept of perfection (τελ-) is the second most common theme in Hebrews. In extra-biblical Greek and the NT apart from Hebrews, the meanings revolve around the idea of bringing a person or action to completion.¹³ Most crucial for Hebrews, however, is a technical use from the Septuagint.

The phrase τελειώω τὰς χεῖράς τινος . . . is to be understood along the same lines. . . . It is . . . used for the Hbr. "to fill the hands" [מִלֵּא יָדַי-יְדֶיךָ]. . . . That someone's hands are made free from stain, or that he is made free from stain, means finally that the one concerned is "able to practice the cultus," cf. Lv. 21:10.¹⁴

It is appropriate that Hebrews, with its theme of Jesus as High Priest, follows the cultic implications of the Septuagint. Christ is not only fully qualified for his ministry as priest, but it is through this

¹²Gerhard Delling, "τέλος," etc., *TDNT* 8 (1972) 86.

¹³*Ibid.*, 80-82.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 80-81.

ministry that he qualifies believers to approach God. This is why the elders were not brought to completion, since their qualification was based on his priestly act which came later. Delling aptly expresses what it means that Jesus is the τελειωτής / 'perfecter' (12:2):

God has qualified Jesus . . . "to come before him" in priestly action. He has done so by the suffering (2:10) in which Jesus confirmed His obedience, 5:8f. As the One qualified (τελειωθείς) for priestly ministry before God, as the One eternally qualified (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένος, 7:28), He is the absolute High-priest. . . . By His high-priestly work . . . before God Christ has once and for all "qualified" those for whom he acts "to come directly before God" (10:14; cf. 7:19) in the heavenly sanctuary as men whose sin is expiated.¹⁵

The development of the idea of perfection focuses on Jesus as the Pioneer who leads believers to maturity in chaps. 1–6. In the middle section of the book the focus is on the perfecting ministry of Christ, something that could not be accomplished by the Levitical priesthood (chaps. 7–10). Then in 11:1–12:2, the elders had not yet come to completion (11:40) because Jesus' sacrifice had not yet been offered as the basis for their qualification to approach God. Believers of the present age, however, with the groundwork of Jesus' sacrifice already laid, are regarded as complete (as are the elders since the church age has dawned, cf. 12:23). Facing suffering calls for endurance, and that endurance is accomplished by faith, that is, by looking to the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith, Jesus (12:2), the one who led the way through suffering and who qualifies his people to come before God.

PROMISE

The concept of 'promise' (ἐπαγγελ-) is unique for two reasons. First, as a theological idea it practically originated with the Bible; the Greek gods did not make promises, and the gods of the ANE did not keep promises. Second, the verbal root itself is very rare in the LXX; while promise is a basic OT concept, this particular root is almost non-existent in the Greek of the LXX.

In extra-biblical Greek, the root has many meanings, but the common factor in all of them has been mentioned already: "In all these examples there is reference to man's promises to a god, but never ἐπαγγελίαι θεοῦ. . . . There is only one known example of the promise of a god."¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., 83.

¹⁶Julius Schniewind and Gerhard Friedrich, "ἐπαγγέλλω," etc., *TDNT* 2 (1964), 578–79.

Of the four occurrences of the root in the LXX that have a Hebrew equivalent, the most instructive is in Esth 4:7. In this verse ἐπηγγείλατο translates אָמַר / 'he said'. The LXX translators took the words of Haman to be a "promise." The same is true of the divine promise throughout the OT. When God says something, it can be taken as promised. A good example of this is found in Gen 15:5: "Then He brought him [Abraham] outside and said, 'Look at the sky and count the stars—if you can count them!' So, He said [וַיֹּאמֶר] MT = LXX εἶπεν] to him, 'Thus your seed will be'." In the OT, then, the divine word is often the divine promise.

The NT in some instances follows the secular meaning of extra-biblical Greek.¹⁷ More often, though, it develops the OT idea of promise. The verb refers to the promise to Abraham (e.g., Acts 7:5) as well as the eschatological promise (Jas 1:12; 2:5; 1 John 2:25). The noun is used by Paul to bring these two concepts together.

In Hebrews the promise is also associated with the promise made to Abraham (6:12–20) and yet takes on the status of an eschatological hope yet to be realized (10:36). This is because of the other-worldly nature of the promised inheritance (as developed, for example, in 11:13–16). The elders had to welcome the promises "from a distance," because the basis of their reception, the High Priestly work of Christ, was not yet complete. The believers of this present age, on the other hand, have possession of the promise in the sense that Christ's sacrifice is complete, yet in their earthly pilgrimage they are absent from the promised heavenly fatherland. They therefore have need of endurance in suffering in order to receive the promise, which the elders by now have received (12:22–23).

Within 11:1–12:2, the concept ἐπαγγελ- stresses two major theological points. First, by the repetition of the phrase πιστὸς ὁ ἐπαγγελλόμενος / 'He who promised is trustworthy' (10:23, 11:11), the purpose of God to carry out the promise is established. Second, the contradiction of "received, but did not receive" regarding the elders demonstrates the crucial nature of Christ's sacrifice as the basis for the fulfillment of God's promises.

ENDURANCE

The verbal concept of 'remain' (μεν-) underlies two important theological themes in Hebrews: (1) the permanent as contrasted with the temporary in God's plan, and (2) endurance in suffering.

The idea of permanence is common in extra-biblical Greek and the LXX. NT theology stresses (1) the immutability of God and

¹⁷Ibid., 579.

divine things (Rom 9:11; 1 Pet 1:23, 25), and (2) the abiding in contrast to the transitory (1 Cor 13:13; 2 Cor 3:11).¹⁸

This latter theme is central to Hebrews. Beginning in chap. 7, Melchizedek and his priesthood are contrasted with the Levitical order (vv 2, 23, 24). The former is eternal, the latter temporal. Thus the ministry of Christ has an eternal significance. His New Covenant is the eternal covenant (13:20), making the first temporary. Evidence of this is seen in the ability of the subjects of the Mosaic covenant to persevere (8:9). That believers have an eternal possession is proven by the fact that the readers were able to take the robbery of their earthly goods with joy (10:34). After all, they awaited a kingdom that cannot be shaken (12:27), a city that does not remain "here" (13:14).

Of greater importance for Heb 11:1–12:2 are ὑπομένειν and ὑπομονή which occur only in the final exhortation (12:1–2). The Greeks regarded this as a virtue roughly equivalent to "courage." The LXX reflects the OT approach which considered endurance not as a manly virtue, but rather an inclination to trust God's promise: "While the Greek moralist censured the linking of ὑπομονή with hope as an inadmissible weakening, OT ὑπομονή issues almost wholly in hope."¹⁹ The peculiar LXX expression ὑπομένοντες τὸν κύριον / 'waiting on the Lord' (cf. Ps 36 [37 MT]:9) does not occur in the NT. However, the NT concept of enduring the trials of this present life (1 Cor 13:7) implies waiting on the Lord, and "apparently the centrality of faith and the prominence given to ἐλπίς ["hope"] as primary Christian virtues leave no place for the OT formula."²⁰ This seems more likely where faith and hope occur in the same context with endurance (1 Cor 13:13; Titus 2:2).

The linking of faith with endurance is especially noteworthy in Hebrews, where faith is seen as the means of endurance. The readers, who have already endured suffering (10:32), still have need of endurance for the race ahead (10:36; 12:1, 7). Their attention is therefore directed toward Jesus, who in carrying out his High Priestly sacrifice by enduring the cross (12:2, 3) is the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith.

SUPERIORITY

The concept 'better' (κρείττον) is crucial to the theology of Hebrews—it occurs more than twice as often here (13×) as in the rest of the NT (6×). Originally a comparative of κρατός / 'strong', it

¹⁸Also note the specialized uses of μέν- in the Pastorals and the Johannine literature; F. Hauck, "μένω," etc., *TDNT* 4 (1967) 574–76.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 584.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 585.

is used predominantly in the LXX as a predicate adjective translating the Hebrew expression כֵּן . . . טוֹב / 'better . . . than' (see Prov 21:9, 19).

In Hebrews κρείττον is used primarily as an adjective in the attributive position ("better hope," "better covenant," for example). The word is used first to develop the superiority of Christ (1:4; 7:7), then of the better things that relate to salvation (6:9). By the time the "something better for us" is mentioned (11:40), on account of which the elders could not come to full completion, the readers have already heard of the "better hope" (7:19), "better covenant" (7:22; 8:6), "better promises" (8:6), "better sacrifices" (9:23), "better possession" (10:34), "better fatherland" (11:14, 16), and "better resurrection" (11:35). All these things are direct benefits of the climactic High Priestly work of Christ at the cross.

WITNESS

The word 'witness' is naturally associated with testimony in a legal setting. The root μαρτ- is so used throughout Greek literature, extra-biblical as well as the OT and the NT. There is a more technical sense, that of "good reputation," "approval," which predominates in Hebrews. This sense of "witness" is based on the veracity of the one giving testimony and thus "relates to things which by their very nature cannot be submitted to empirical investigation."²¹ It is in this sense that Hebrews speaks of God "adding his witness" (συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος, 2:4) to the apostolic preaching and of Scripture "emphatically affirming" (διεμαρτύρατο, 2:6) the author's point.

It is with this background that the unique connotation of μάρτυς / 'witness' in 12:1 is best understood:

The distinctive thing here is, of course, that this νέφος μαρτύρων consists of those who according to c. 11 have received witness (acknowledgement) from God because of their faith. . . . As such, they bear witness by the very fact of their existence to the authenticity of faith. It thus seems that the factual witness is also implicitly a confessing witness.²²

The theological import of μαρτ- in 11:1–12:2, then, is that God's approval comes by faith, that is, by looking to Jesus. As the elders looked forward to that sacrifice at the cross, which would ultimately qualify them to enter God's presence, they lived by faith. Now that Jesus has offered that final sacrifice, believers run the race by looking to him, realizing they are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who are

²¹H. Strathmann, "μάρτυς," etc., *TDNT* 4 (1967) 478.

²²*Ibid.*, 491.

approved by God and testify to the necessity of faith as the means of running with endurance.

INHERITANCE

The concept of 'inheritance' (κληρο-) is derived from the verb κλάω 'to break', indicating the breaking up and distributing of an inheritance²³ (the meanings in extra-biblical Greek fit this etymology).²⁴

The major OT theme is that of the possession of the land promised to the fathers. The NT follows this, though often the inheritance is a spiritual rather than a material one. There is, however, a peculiar emphasis in NT theology: "A firm link is established between son-ship and inheritance such as we hardly find in the Old Testament and later Judaism, and runs through the whole of the New Testament."²⁵

This emphasis on sonship is also followed in Hebrews. After identifying believers with Jesus (1:4, 14) and specifying that their inheritance is salvation, the author then develops the concept of sonship relative to Jesus as the Pioneer of salvation (2:10-14). Believers, then, are those who receive "the promise of an eternal inheritance" (9:15). In chap. 11, it is the elders who are heirs (vv 7, 8, 9). It is significant that the inheritance of "righteousness based on faith" precedes the inheritance of the land, since ultimately it is the former that qualifies them to stand before God. This fact, together with the longing of the elders for the heavenly city (11:13-16), shows that the inheritance they saw from a distance was that unseen place, the presence of God. It is that place to which the readers have come (12:22-24), yet they are still pursuing it as they run their earthly race looking to the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith (12:1-2).

CONCLUSION

The theological argument of Heb 11:1-12:2 is set within the hortatory context of the book as follows: the readers, while tempted to desert the New Covenant community for the Old Covenant (10:38-39; 8:13), are commended for their past endurance of suffering (10:32-34), warned against throwing away their confidence (10:35), and told that they need endurance (10:36) in order to lay hold of the promised inheritance. That inheritance consists of the better things laid up for them, including their final approval by God and entrance into his presence in the heavenly city. They are then given an overview of great episodes in the lives of the elders, who were approved

²³Eichler, "κληρος," 296.

²⁴Werner Foerster and Johannes Herrmann, "κληρος," etc., *TDNT* 3 (1965) 768.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 781-82.

by God and who endured by faith. Their attention is turned to the focus of faith, Jesus, who endured the greatest and most significant suffering of all, the cross. The explanation of Jesus' status as Pioneer and Perfecter of faith and the conclusion that he has now sat down at God's right hand is followed by the sober reminder that the readers may face the prospect of death in following their leader (12:3-4), but that even so suffering is evidence of the Father's loving hand of discipline (12:5-8).

Finally, to summarize the theological argument of this passage, the readers require endurance to run the race and to bear suffering. The elders endured by faith. Jesus is the focus of faith. Therefore the readers can run the race with endurance by looking to Jesus—faith is the means of endurance.

CRITICAL NOTE

ANOTHER WORD-PLAY IN AMOS?

COMMENTATORS agree that the writer of the book of Amos uses a paranomasia involving a basket of summer fruit (קִיץ) and a prediction of the coming end (קֵץ) in 8:1-2 to make a specific point.¹ Such word-plays are not uncommon in Scripture; their general function is aptly described by von Rad.² It is suggested here that the device in 8:1-2 is actually the second of two used by the writer of this book.

The first word-play occurs on the root קמא, forms of which occur only three times in this book. In 2:14 a Piel form of the verb is used and in 2:16 an adjectival form. In both cases the prophet is speaking of those who are powerful by human standards but whose power is futile in the face of the harsh judgment of 2:14-16.

The last instance of the root קמא appears in the proper name of the priest of Bethel: Amaziah (7:10, 12, 14). To suggest a word-play here in the conventional sense seems unfounded at first, since the terms are not physically adjacent in the text. But the likelihood that this is such a literary nicety grows once a larger part of this book is considered.

One of the dominant themes of Amos's prophecy involves his denunciation of Israel. This begins at 2:6, and the prophet's subsequent words show a repeated emphasis on the people's refusal to acknowledge God. Because of this attitude, they are subject to judgment. One

¹See, e.g., R. S. Cripps, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos* (London: SPCK, 1969) 240; E. Hammershaimb, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970) 120; W. R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (New York: Scribner's, 1905) 175; J. L. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) 141; and H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 317, 319. Also, the study by B. D. Rahtjen, "A Critical Note on Amos 8:1-2," *JBL* 83 (1964) 417, notes a use of קץ in the Gezer Calendar that is remarkably similar to that in Amos.

²G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Row, 1962-65) 2.84 says: "the word in question loses a certain amount of its meaning, and apparently acts as a series of sounds rather than as a way of conveying meaning; but this series of sounds, which is the word reduced to its original value, is at the same time given a greatly intensified meaning, in that it is now, in respect of its form, surrounded by new associations and new meanings." Von Rad identifies word-plays in Isa 10:29-31; Jer 1:11-12; Mic 1:10-15. Cf. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 175, where word-plays are identified in Jer 50:20, 34, 51:20; Ezek 25:16; and Hos 1:5.

aspect of the people's obduracy is reliance on their own understanding and abilities: they reverse the proper procedure for prophets and Nazirites (2:12), oppress the unfortunate (5:12), worship false gods (5:26), and engage in insouciant lounging (6:4-6). All this contrasts with the acceptable attitude of respect and worship that is characteristic of an overt dependence on God.

Because of this independence, Amos predicts terrible destruction destined to fall first on the leaders of the people (6:1) who were castigated as impotent despite their power in 2:14-16. When the prophet then refers in 7:10-16 to one whose very name speaks of power, Amos reminds his readers of God's powerful judgment already pronounced. Now, Amaziah himself is to receive a similar punishment since he denounces the prophet of God (7:17).

The possibility of a word-play on אִמְזִיָּה is further suggested by the fact that this Amaziah is a character otherwise unknown in Scripture. There are references to three other figures with the same name,³ but none of these can be Amaziah of Bethel. It is significant, then, that of all the detractors encountered by Amos, only this one is specifically named.

The first word-play depends on information that runs through most of the book. It highlights a problem rife in the OT: the independence of Israel from God. This paranomasia in turn sets the stage for the obvious device of 8:1-2. In the context of Amos's fourth vision, a second word-play serves as the most complete indication of destruction given up to this point in the prophecy. The end (8:26),⁴ when the powerful ones will certainly perish, is very near.

DANIEL SCHMIDT

³These are: (1) a son of Joash and king of Judah (2 Kgs 14:1-20; 2 Chronicles 25); (2) a descendant of Simeon (1 Chr 4:34); and (3) a temple musician in the line of Levi (1 Chr 6:45).

⁴Also called "that day" (8:3, cf. 2:16).

BOOK REVIEWS

Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon, edited by D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. Pp. 468. \$14.95. Paper.

This book is a major evangelical contribution to the recent deluge of books on the issue of biblical inerrancy and authority. Intended as a companion and supplement to the editors' *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), it attempts to maintain a place in the "central tradition of the church's understanding of the Bible—but pressing beyond that tradition at points to address new questions and to articulate as carefully as possible a responsible doctrine of Scripture in light of those new questions" (p. ix). In this respect, it is self-consciously in contrast to the recent publications of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy which for the most part, according to Carson, has "simply aimed to restate the traditional positions and delineate the weaknesses of their opponents" (p. 7).

The overall quality and scholarship of the articles is very good, and most chapters are filled with insightful discussions and new suggestions for dealing with some of the difficulties facing the inerrantist view of Scripture. As is to be expected, it is doubtful that anyone will accept all the conclusions found here. Nevertheless, this volume commends itself to all who hold (or reject) an inerrantist approach as an important work that must be reckoned with.

As the title suggests, the essays in this book cover a broad range of topics. Four of the essays speak, at least in a general sense, of the relationship between hermeneutics and inerrancy. Vanhoozer provides an important discussion of how to understand biblical literature. He follows modern theories of language in suggesting a new approach to understanding proposition and genre. By broadening the understanding of infallibility and truth (beyond science, history, etc.), he reinforces the evangelical conviction that the Bible is wholly true, infallible, and inerrant. Silva notes the difficulties of historical reconstruction in the NT. The brevity of the biblical record explains some of the difficulties in understanding the Pharisees and first century Christianity. Blomberg's discussion of harmonization justifies the method as one of several ways to deal with difficulties in historical accounts. Examples are drawn from both biblical and non-biblical histories. The difficulties of *sensus plenior* for an inerrantist hermeneutic are addressed by Moo. He suggests a variety of approaches to the relevant passages, including a broad "canonical" approach (cf. Jack R. Riggs, "The 'Fuller Meaning' of Scripture: A Hermeneutical Question for Evangelicals," *GTJ* 7 [1986] 213–28).

The question of authority is the topic of two essays. Frame's discussion of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Scripture focuses primarily on the internal testimony of the Spirit. I would have appreciated more clarity on the relation of the Spirit to hermeneutics (illumination). There also seems to be some inconsistency regarding the Spirit's illumination concerning the extent

of the canon (pp. 228–29). Bromiley treats Barth's view of biblical authority in a capable, but not particularly ground-breaking fashion.

Dunbar's extensive discussion of the canon provides a helpful survey of the history of the canon and some recent approaches. The stress on the salvation-historical context of the NT canon is helpful, although the fact that the "Protestant" canon was not standardized until the Reformation needs to be addressed more fully.

The editors contribute two additional essays. Carson surveys recent developments in the doctrine of Scripture and furnishes, in essence, an introduction to the two volume set. Woodbridge also adds a historical analysis of the effect of the Enlightenment on the doctrine of Scripture.

Some brief comments about the format are in order. The table of contents contains helpful abstracts of the articles. There are also several useful indexes. My major complaint about format is that the margins are too small. This book demands to be read with pen in hand and there is woefully insufficient space for notes, comments, etc. Despite this minor failing, this volume is essential reading for those who take seriously the scholarly task of understanding and especially defending the doctrine of inerrancy.

CARL E. SANDERS II

DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

How To Read the Bible, by A. J. Conyers. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986. Pp. 197. \$6.95. Paper.

Conyers's book is the first in InterVarsity Press's new *How To Read Series*, introducing the subject of Bible study for "nonprofessionals who want a professional understanding of Scripture." The series will include titles that focus attention on specific sections of the Bible. *How to Read the Bible* presumably provides an overview and context for ensuing books. From this first book it is clear that the editors of the series intend to avoid technical terminology, specialized information, and theological cruxes. While Conyers's book strikes this note clearly, it is uneven in its development of the subject of Bible reading and study.

Part One, "The Art of Bible Reading," provides the groundwork for Conyers's consideration of Bible reading. Conyers argues that, because "we each read the Bible in our own way" (p. 10), there must be an emphasis on the personal element in Bible reading. "We each come to know the soul's hunger of David, the anguish of Jeremiah, the burning conviction of Paul. The response to such an encounter is unpredictable. It is not, nor should it be, governed by rules and techniques" (p. 10). However, Conyers's emphasis on the subjective aspect of Bible study threatens to overshadow the need for objective, systematic study (the problem of objectivity in hermeneutics notwithstanding). In so arguing, Conyers underscores the personal nature of the God to be found in the Bible for whom "Scripture is not a dead letter, but a living witness" (p. 23).

The author devotes half of his text to methods of Bible study. The middle section entitled "The Practice of Bible Reading," begins from the supposition that many well-intentioned Bible readers are frustrated because the material has daunted them at some point, probably early in the Pentateuch. In order to avoid such early "burnout," Conyers suggests that the reader begin with "representative readings" throughout the Bible. For instance, instead of reading all of the OT history consecutively (and thereby "stalling"), he suggests reading only Exodus and either Ruth or Esther at first. This, Conyers suggests, will help the reader get the flavor of OT history without being overwhelmed by its detail too early in the study. By dividing the Bible into such familiar categories as history, prophets, etc., and by focusing attention on representative books from within each category, Conyers provides a workable strategy to help the beginning Bible student maintain interest. The author goes on to suggest other methods of Bible reading, each building on the previous approach and the whole leading to a fairly thorough "first-look" at the biblical data. I found Conyers's observation of key topics, such as creation, fall, election, and redemption in the OT, particularly useful for the beginner.

While most of this book is a practical primer, Conyers develops a significant theoretical angle in his last section, "Bible Reading in Home and Church." His thesis is that "Bible study provides the essential grammar and vocabulary of faith" (p. 157). By the term, "vocabulary," Conyers relates faith directly to the Word of God; by "grammar," he suggests the relationships of the believer with God (in all three persons) and with other humans. The association of faith with relationships is particularly apt in this last section, dealing as it does with the family, the church, and world missions. The best material in the book is Conyers's comments on Bible reading in the family. The vocabulary of family life, he asserts, is love, faith, loyalty, and hope—all leading to truth. The grammar of family life is that it is in family relationships that Christians develop the "consciousness of God" that constitutes the Christian faith. There is, says Conyers, a close relationship between God's having communicated (revealed) himself to men and intercommunicating within the God-given unit of the family.

In the last pages of his book, Conyers turns to the church and missions. The church in America receives a gentle rebuke in *How to Read the Bible* for the lack of adequate intellectual content in too many sermons. But keep in mind that it is in the context of Conyers's emphasis on the personal experience of the Bible in study that the reader must understand his comment regarding the lack of adequate content in contemporary preaching. Concerning missions, Conyers makes it clear that there is only one message to bring, one source of unity if people in other cultures are to be evangelized. The Bible must be upheld as the basis of faith, the only starting point for a common language with non-Christians.

In *How to Read the Bible*, Conyers and the editors at InterVarsity provide the general parameters for the How to Read Series. Conyers gives some eminently wise and practical advice for beginning students of the Bible and brings a refreshing emphasis on the necessity of faith as the only

adequate basis for the Christian family. Perhaps the greatest flaw in this book is that, though he introduces the significant thesis that Scripture provides the vocabulary and grammar of faith, the author develops it inconsistently. However, though not perfectly developed, it is a thesis with which every student of the Bible could profitably interact.

MICHAEL E. TRAVERS
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Numbers, by Philip J. Budd. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word, 1984. Pp. xxxii + 409. \$18.95. Cloth.

Budd's commentary on Numbers is one of the pioneering volumes in the Word Biblical Commentary. The editors bill this series as "evangelical." If this commentary is considered to be evangelical, then the complete series promises to be a mixed bag at best.

For Budd, Numbers is part of a larger literary whole (comprising the books of Genesis through Joshua) that is the product of the priestly school of writers (sixth through fifth centuries B.C.). As Budd states,

The view adopted here is that as recognizable entities the priestly revisions of tradition belong essentially with that influential movement in Judaism which originated in Babylon in exilic times, and which effected a resettlement in Palestine from the late sixth century onward. The revisions provide both an apologia for this group of Jews, and also some programmatic proposals for the restoration [p. xix].

Numbers itself is either totally or substantially the work of the priestly school everywhere except chaps. 11-12 and chaps. 21-24. These chapters are chiefly the work of the Yahwist whose main concern was to foster national identity and unity and whose work of editing and authorship essentially took place after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, reaching its peak in the era of Josiah. In fact,

The Yahwist may have been one of the court faction which was able to shape the early years of Josiah's reign (2 Kgs 21:24; 22:1), and to influence its course throughout. His emphasis on the principles of Mosaic leadership and of a Mosaic mediation of Sinaitic law prepared the way for the idea of Mosaic authority—the foundation of the first edition of Deuteronomy, and the main stimulus to the reformation of 621 B.C. [pp. xxiv-xxv].

Budd finds this interest in "Mosaic validation" to permeate chaps. 11-12 (p. 138), chapters that the author of Numbers, "himself an interpreter of tradition through supplementation," draws upon to provide a "springboard for his own treatment of wilderness disaffection" (p. 139). The story of the desert snakes (21:4-9), rather than being a true historical account (as Jesus himself understood it; cf. John 3:14), was probably "based on a cultic etiology of Nehushtan" whose healing cult was rightly attacked by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:4) for its Canaanite associations (p. 235). The Balaam oracles that make up the major portion of chaps. 22-24 receive a complex literary analysis. Budd argues that an Elohist component (p. 262), originating in prophetic

circles (p. 272), has been molded and heightened by the Yahwistic editor (p. 264) to form "a dramatic vindication of the independence of the prophetic spirit over against kings, and of the invincibility of Israel under God" (p. 272). The final form of the story yields "a powerful celebration of the certainty of Israel's success" (p. 273).

Thus, far from examining a straightforward record of Israel's pre-conquest journey, Budd's investigations "have proceeded on the assumption that the book of Numbers is a complex accumulation of tradition. . . . This assumption is rooted in the findings of literary and historical criticism, and has been shown to be justified at every stage of the enquiry" (p. xxvi).

It is obvious that Budd's treatment of Numbers is a modern presentation of the older documentary theory. The various conclusions reached in the commentary have repeatedly been examined in the standard evangelical introductions and commentaries as well as in many critical discussions on the Pentateuch. While readers of this commentary will become well acquainted with current critical thinking on the book of Numbers, they will find little that will be of spiritual enrichment. Accordingly, the book will probably not have a warm reception in the evangelical community for which the series presumably was targeted.

RICHARD D. PATTERSON
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Israel among the Nations, by Richard J. Coggins and S. Paul Re'em. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. x + 140. \$7.95. Paper.

This volume forms part of the International Theological Commentary series, which focuses on the theological interpretation of larger units of the biblical texts. Drawing upon an international group of Christian scholars, the series' aim is to demonstrate that the biblical message comprises two testaments that are intimately related. Therefore, the commentators in this series introduce their readers to the Jewish traditions relative to the Bible and "to issues that are the special problems of persons who live outside of the 'Christian' West, issues such as race relations, personal survival and fulfillment, liberation, revolution, famine, tyranny, disease, war, the poor, religion and state" (p. ix).

The first two portions of the book are written by Coggins. Coggins finds Nahum to be a prophet, roughly contemporary with Jeremiah and the Deuteronomist, who drew upon a core of literary expressions common to the cult prophets. Coggins entitles the biblical book of Nahum, "In Wrath Remember Mercy," and finds the book's central theme to be the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh (p. 7). Particular focus is upon the judgment of Nineveh, not only as the capital of the oppressive and hated Assyrian empire, but as a "symbol of the forces of evil . . . , a symbol which could legitimately be reapplied to new situations" (p. 17).

The pages that follow are based upon a serious consideration of the Hebrew text, particularly in the light of its Northwest Semitic linguistic and

literary associations. Although Coggins often reflects typical critical opinion (e.g., Coggins relates 1:15 to an autumn enthronement ritual proclaiming the kingship of Yahweh [pp. 33–34], and discounts the helpfulness of 3:8 and other data for dating the book [pp. 51–52]), his brief remarks are filled with helpful information and spiritual insight. A good working bibliography is also included.

Coggins views Obadiah as having been composed in Jerusalem with the basic purpose of proclaiming the judgment of Edom. However, more than historical Edom is intended, for “Edom is becoming a symbol of all that stands in enmity to God” (p. 76). He likewise finds Obadiah reflective of the custom whereby the prophets used a common “store of vocabulary, probably of Jerusalemite origin, upon which different prophetic collections might draw” (p. 74). This Coggins demonstrates in the pages that follow. Although the author’s frequent attention to literary matters and his own uncertainties on several issues make his analysis of Obadiah less rewarding than his treatment of Nahum, he leaves the reader with a good grasp of the primary themes found in that short book. He again includes a helpful bibliography. Both of Coggins’s sections, despite their brevity, show good interaction with the chief problems of the respective books and the contemporary solutions to them.

The final section on Esther by S. Paul Re³emi contains several interesting suggestions. Re³emi proposes that Esther is a historical novel built upon actual events that transpired in Persia early in the reign of Artaxerxes II (Mnemon, 404–358 B.C.). Although the book contains a kernel of historical truth, it reaches its final form late in the intertestamental period, probably in the second century B.C. The book, then, has a historical core “to which have been added legendary and pictorial elements, notably the story of Vashti and the banquet of the king” (p. 109). The purpose of the author of Esther, as reflected in the final edition, is “to show that God is mighty to help even in the most desperate of situations. What he wants to say is that no human power can finally obstruct God’s plan and purpose of salvation, nor thwart God’s loyalty to his Covenant; for by means of it he had chosen to use his own people for the redemption of all mankind” (pp. 113–14).

Re³emi’s brief comments that follow (pp. 115–39) are both concise and clear, reading along smoothly, although at times sounding like a paraphrase of the text. Although Re³emi’s work is brief and somewhat popular in its approach, and although Evangelicals will certainly disagree often with the conclusions of the author, the helpful and practical insights that he gives enable the book to be used with profit.

RICHARD D. PATTERSON
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

First Corinthians, by Robert B. Hughes. Everyman’s Bible Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1985. Pp. 157. \$5.95. Paper.

Hughes, who teaches biblical literature at Western Seminary in Portland, opens his commentary by presenting “a window on Corinth,” in which he

discusses several key truths taught in 1 Corinthians. These truths show that Paul was sensitive to his audience's situation and that he attempted to tailor his letter to meet its needs. Hughes then discusses the structure of the epistle, Paul's prior relations with the Corinthians, and the occasion for writing. Hughes understands 1 Corinthians to be framed by Paul's two mentions of his itineraries. The first (4:18–21) marks the transition from the opening section of the letter to the weightier matters in chaps. 5–15. The second (16:3–9) reveals Paul's plan to change his itinerary and to come to them by the land route that passed through Macedonia instead of coming to Corinth directly by sea from Ephesus. Paul's purpose in announcing these visits is "to place Paul's pending arrival before the readers in the hope that they would solve their problems before he arrived" (p. 13). This opening chapter of the commentary closes with the practical admonition that the modern reader would do well to let 1 Corinthians speak today, since "we will find similar targets in our lives that need to be pierced with the same arrows Paul shot so long ago" (pp. 18–19).

The commentary follows a standard format. The innovative contribution of the volume is to be found in the author's approach to Paul's "strategy" in dealing with the problems among the Corinthians. The strategy was threefold: to state the *problem*, provide a *solution*, and then give the *purpose* behind the solution (p. 21). For example, in 5:1–3 Paul deals with the problem of sexual impurity (vv 1–2) by advancing the solution of corporeal judgment (v 5) based on his purpose to keep the church free from evil (v 7). Hughes maintains this approach throughout the commentary, and it must be admitted that it represents a novel and refreshing method. The problem with it is that verses must frequently be taken out of context in order to be placed into Hughes's scheme. For example, the "problem" of spiritual gifts stated in 12:29–30 finds its "solution" in verses that are scattered throughout chaps. 12–14 (12:12, 22, 25; 13:13; 14:12, 22), several of which occur even before the statement of the problem by Paul! Nevertheless, Hughes's method substantially succeeds in establishing Paul's general response to the problems plaguing the church. This method would be a valuable approach for pastors who are contemplating preaching through 1 Corinthians.

The commentary itself has a pleasant and readable format. Hughes's comments are generally crisp, brief, and careful. Although he makes use of contemporary scholarship, references to other works are kept to a minimum. The paragraph by paragraph comments are usually preceded by introductory remarks that orient the reader to the structure of the passage and indicate any special problems that might exist. In general, the commentary makes no special advances over previous studies of 1 Corinthians, though this fact does not necessarily reflect negatively on either the author or the publisher.

A few minor criticisms are in order. While I find myself in substantial agreement with the analysis of Hughes, the commentary is obviously aimed at lay people who have little or no training in biblical studies, and it treads the thin line between being simple and simplistic. For the most part it contains accurate exegesis, although the doctrinal discussions in particular are overly simplified. In a discussion of the weak and the strong, for example, Hughes confuses sociological and ethical categories in identifying the strong

and the weak solely with different social classes (p. 9). Though Hughes does not mention it, this view is becoming the consensus among many NT scholars, thanks to the work of Gerd Theissen ("Die Starken und Schwachen in Korinth," *EvT* 35 [1975] 155-72) and especially Alfred Schreiber (*Die Gemeinde in Korinth: Versuch einer gruppendynamischen Betrachtung der Entwicklung der Gemeinde von Korinth auf der Basis des ersten Korintherbriefes* [NTAbh 12; Münster: Aschendorff, 1977]). This interpretation certainly contains an element of truth, but the casuistical aspect of the problem between the strong and the weak, indicated most clearly by the thrice-repeated reference to *συνείδησις* (8:7, 10, 12), must not be ignored (see my discussion in *Paul, Apostle of Weakness* [New York: Lang, 1984] 107-16, 169-70). It would also be confusing to a layperson, one suspects, to be told that "judging the body" (11:29) refers to the human body (p. 114). Surely Paul means that Christians must recognize the special character of the eucharist as the *Lord's Supper*. Instead of recognizing the presence of Christ at the Supper, many were treating it like an ordinary meal. Paul's point is that if Christians wanted merely to enjoy a good meal together, they were to do so at home (11:34).

In short, the very strength of this commentary (its brevity) may also be its greatest weakness. In its attempt to reach a broad audience, the work probably does not provide laypeople with much new information. Contrary to the statement of the book's cover, Hughes's reflections do not offer an "in-depth" picture of 1 Corinthians. They are nevertheless a well-organized articulation of confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit of God to overcome the weaknesses inherent in mankind. For this salutary reminder alone we should be grateful to the author.

DAVID ALAN BLACK
GRACE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Call to Commitment: Responding to the Message of Hebrews, by William L. Lane. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985. Pp. 184. \$7.95. Paper.

For those NT students whose "Katherine" is the Epistle to the Hebrews (to use Luther's description of his beloved Galatians), the forthcoming Word Biblical Commentary on Hebrews by William Lane will be welcomed with open arms. If it matches the quality of the volumes that have already been published, it will indeed be a welcome addition to the student's library. Meanwhile, Lane has given us a meaty foretaste of things to come. *Call to Commitment* may be only a primer for Lane's exegetical commentary, but its contents are profoundly challenging for any reader who desires a mature understanding of this oftentimes enigmatic epistle.

The issues that Lane addresses in this profoundly simple study of Hebrews are the basic ones: Why is Hebrews so frequently neglected in Bible study? Why is it frequently omitted in preaching and teaching? What are the factors that will enable the average Christian to bring the epistle into the realm of his own experience and understanding? While working on his larger commentary, Lane struggled with these and other issues. The central impor-

tance and basic appeal of Hebrews, Lane concluded, is its simple focus on the need for renewed commitment to the Lord of the church. It is this central theme that makes Hebrews at once so challenging and threatening. Like the letter, *Call to Commitment* is a summons for Christians to take their Christianity seriously through practical obedience to Jesus Christ and by living with a radically new view of reality that is based on the certain presence of God in daily life. Thus, like Hebrews itself, Lane's work is more of a sermon than a treatise, and as a sermon it addresses concerns that are relevant to today's societal stresses.

Lane understands the literary nature of Hebrews to be sermonic rather than epistolary (this is disputed by some, e.g., Leon Morris). This means that "we should approach Hebrews as we would approach any sermon, with a readiness to hear what a pastor, who is sensitive to God and deeply concerned for his people, has to say" (p. 17). Hence, throughout the commentary Lane is constantly reminding his readers that Hebrews is a call to listen to the voice of God and to allow that Word to penetrate our thoughts and attitudes. To use a modern analogy, Lane views the author of Hebrews as a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose greatest concern is with the cost of discipleship (see pp. 20-23). Wrestling with the cost of their commitment to Christ, which had brought them persecution and hardship, the readers had come dangerously close to rejecting their faith. For Lane, these circumstances best describe the Jewish Christians in Rome who had a first-hand experience of the cost of discipleship under Claudius and Nero. In short, Hebrews is essentially a pastor's attempt to encourage these believers in the face of their peril and to warn them of the consequences if they do not hold firm to their confession. This message is not, however, historically bound, but has ramifications for Christians of all ages:

A rediscovery of Hebrews by the contemporary Church will be the source of fresh perspectives from which to approach obedience and mission in a materialistic and indifferent society. The call to commitment that is issued by this sermon for the Christian pilgrim must be proclaimed with renewed intensity [p. 179].

In the remainder of the commentary, Lane traces the writer's argument thought by thought rather than verse by verse. Lane's exegesis is a satisfying balance between careful exposition and practical application. For the most part he succeeds in allowing the "voice" of the divine Author of Hebrews to be heard. In places, however, Lane can be faulted for reading too much into the text. For example, in tracing the author's description of the Son in 1:1-4 to Jewish Wisdom literature ("*Jesus is presented in the guise of Wisdom*," p. 33, his emphasis), Lane may be charged with what Sandmel once called "parallelomania." While parallels with Jewish Wisdom sources exist, it seems clear that in 1:1-4 the author's central affirmation is the nature and dignity of Christ as God's *Son*. Michel and others have shown that the frequent characterization of angels as "sons of God" in the biblical literature (cf. Gen 6:2; Psa 29:1; 89:7; Job 1:6) is probably the background for the author's selection of υἱός to describe Jesus in chap. 1 of Hebrews (see O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966] 111; and H. Windisch, *Der Hebrews Hebräerbrief* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1931] 15).

Another problem is Lane's attempt to reconstruct the historical setting of the addressees. His view that the church consisted of the members of a single household and their friends, numbering some fifteen to twenty persons "crowded into a single room, standing or sitting on the floor, while one of their members reads the sermon aloud" (p. 28), makes for imaginative preaching, but the average reader may not be able to discern that this description speaks more of Lane's hypothetical sagacity than of the actual historical situation. Furthermore, Lane's contention that the readers also participated in the synagogue (pp. 61-62) is surely questionable in view of the fact that the synagogue is never mentioned in the epistle (cf. James 2:2).

But these criticisms are relatively minor and do not detract from the overall positive contribution of this commentary. *Call to Commitment* will serve as a useful study guide for groups as well as a helpful resource for individuals. Its focus upon committed Christianity may well be just the thing needed to lead to a rediscovery of this often neglected NT book.

DAVID ALAN BLACK
GRACE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Christian Faith and Historical Understanding, by Ronald Nash with a response by Harold Hoehner. Dallas: Probe; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. Pp. 174. \$5.95. Paper.

Ronald Nash, of Western Kentucky University, has provided a readable and profitable study concentrating on the relation of history to Christianity. Is Christianity a historical religion? Is Christian faith grounded in history? Nash provides insightful and illuminating answers.

While the book interacts with the approaches of von Ranke, Dilthey, Croce, and Collingwood, the author's focus is directed toward the thought of Rudolf Bultmann. Nash offers a well informed summary and critique of positivism and idealism. He then thoroughly examines the philosophy and methodology underlying Bultmann's existentialism. Nash's treatment of the relationship of Christianity to the first century Christ event is persuasively written. The author demonstrates that Bultmann's faulty understanding of history based upon naturalistic presuppositions and his method of demythologizing are the bases for his rejection of the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Moving to evaluate views of objective history, Nash concludes that there is at least a possibility of attaining historical knowledge of past events (such as the resurrection). He shows the weaknesses both of a radical relativism and a radical objectivism when applied to history. He sees the first as illogical and the second as unattainable. His solution is a "soft objectivism," which maintains that past events can be known through historical investigation, but that such knowledge is never absolute. Does such a position open the door to skepticism? Nash says no. Incomplete knowledge, while it should lead to a certain humility in the quest for truth, does not entail incorrect knowledge.

Nash recognizes that historical understanding cannot sidestep the hermeneutical question. The objective "facts" are intertwined with the subjective interpretations of the historian.

The concluding sections of the book survey the views of Bultmann, Barth, Pannenberg, and Ladd on the subject of the resurrection. In keeping with Ladd's position, he acknowledges that assent to the resurrection involves historical investigation as well as the presuppositions of faith.

The book is a useful contribution and should be read by students interested in history, philosophy, or theology. The pastor will find material to strengthen the church's proclamation that Jesus has been raised from the dead and is "Lord."

DAVID S. DOCKERY
CRISWELL COLLEGE

Scripture Index to the New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Index to Selected Extrabiblical Literature, by David Townsley and Russell Bjork. Regency Reference Library. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985. Pp. 320. \$14.95. Paper.

The publication of *NIDNTT* (vols. 1-2, 1975; vol. 3, 1978) was widely hailed in evangelical circles. More concise than Kittel's *TDNT*, it also held promise of being more up to date and less radical in theology. Though somewhat flawed in linguistic theory (see M. Silva, *WTJ* 43 [1981] 395-99), it is widely and profitably used by serious students of the NT. In 1982 a 20 page *Addenda* of recent bibliographic material appeared. When originally published, however, *NIDNTT* lacked a scripture index to complement the indexes of Greek and Hebrew words contained in volume 3. This deficiency has now been remedied.

The publication of the index was facilitated by computer technology. It is designed to be as inclusive as possible. Therefore, users can assume that every reference to a biblical text in the dictionary will appear in the index. As the title indicates, selected extrabiblical literature is also included: OT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jewish Hellenistic literature, early Christian literature, the Mishnah, and the Babylonian Talmud. A byproduct of the index's production was the detection of numerous citation errors in the dictionary. A dagger following index entries alerts readers to check the handy list of Errata on pp. 319-20.

Undoubtedly, present users of *NIDNTT* will want to add this index to their set. The index will help to make accessible the rich contents of the dictionary. Those who have used the scripture index of Kittel's *TDNT* (vol. 10, 1976) will realize the value of such an index for *NIDNTT*. However, Kittel's index utilizes the helpful technique of noting substantive discussions with boldface type. This has not been done in the index for *NIDNTT*. While users of this index may sometimes find "fresh trails" (p. 9) in repeatedly looking up secondary citations, more often this will result in "dead ends"! The value of the index would have been greater if its format had distinguished substantive discussions of biblical texts from secondary citations.

One also tends to wonder why the index was published in paperback format. It does not match the rest of the set and will probably not last as long

under heavy use. Probably the reason was cost. When the dictionary was released in December 1985, it listed for \$8.95. It now lists for \$14.95.

DAVID L. TURNER
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

Christianity and Philosophy, by Keith E. Yandell. Leicester: InterVarsity; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. Pp. xi + 289. \$10.95. Paper

Keith Yandell, professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has contributed the second volume to the new series, *Studies in a Christian World View*, sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies and guided by the editorship of Carl F. H. Henry. The book is concerned with theism in general and Christianity in particular. The purpose of this valuable work is to argue that religious claims can be rationally assessed and to provide reason for believing Christianity is true. Yandell offers a rich exercise in the philosophy of religion.

Each chapter begins with a two page analytical table of contents and concludes with suggestions for additional reading. The analytical table serves as a useful introduction to the chapter. Many of the chapters contain difficult material, and these introductions provide a great service for the non-specialist. The author/editor should be commended for this helpful format.

The initial chapter uses human experience to argue for God's existence. God is the necessary explanation of human experience. Chap. 2 handles the traditional "proofs" for God's existence. The author admits that neither the cosmological, teleological, ontological, nor moral arguments qualify as "proofs" for God's existence. Yet they do have some explanatory force. Chaps. 3 and 4 are responses to objections that can be raised against the first two chapters. In these responses, he shows the truth value of religious claims.

Chaps. 5 and 6 treat the non-cognitivist challenges to theism and morality. The relationship between morality and religion is discussed in chap. 7. The concluding chapter proposes a program for the rational assessment of conceptual systems (religious rationality). If religious claims can be assessed, "then it is the task of the philosophy of religion to show that this is so, stating the constituents of the assessment procedure and applying that procedure—a task that will involve coming to terms with various competing religious and non-religious conceptual systems, offering a fair and accurate analysis of their contents, considering what can be said for and against their truth, and considering possible reformulations of such systems in the light of objections" (p. x). Using this program, Yandell presents a strong case for concluding that Christianity is true.

The book is a carefully written example of the value of analytic philosophy. Directed toward philosophy majors, graduate students, and philosopher/theologians, it is not easy reading. Yandell's writing style is cumbersome—the average length of a sentence is more than fifty words. At times this confuses rather than strengthens the argument. But his case is

richly and forcefully presented. The book is not for everyone, but the effort required to work through the text is rewarding and beneficial.

DAVID S. DOCKERY
CRISWELL COLLEGE

The Mind of John Knox, by Richard G. Kyle. Lawrence, KS: Coronado, 1984. Pp. 347. \$16.50. Cloth.

Although there have been many useful biographies of John Knox, scholars have given but little attention to this reformer as a theologian. Unlike John Calvin (his chief mentor), Knox was not a systematic thinker or writer, so bringing his beliefs into an organized format is a formidable undertaking. Richard G. Kyle, a historian at Tabor College, has, however, performed this task admirably, producing the first full-scale intellectual biography of Scotland's famed reformer.

This book originated as a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of New Mexico, and despite some revisions, it still bears the hallmarks of a decidedly academic document. Consequently, it is rather difficult to read in places, but one who follows it carefully will find his patience amply rewarded. One would do well to read the conclusion first, for it sheds considerable light on the text.

Kyle has, for the most part, made careful use of the appropriate primary sources and the relevant secondary interpretations, and his documentation is massive. After a brief introduction he examines his subject's beliefs on Scripture, God, the church, man, sin, and salvation; and in the last chapter he relates Knox's thinking about civil government and the Christian's role as a citizen.

Although Kyle concurs with most Reformation scholars in holding that Knox was a disciple of Calvin (from whom he borrowed extensively), he indicates correctly that the Scottish reformer was indebted to Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer as well. In fact, in the judgment of this reviewer, the documentation of Luther's influence on Knox and other Protestants is one of the most helpful features of this book.

Such documentation is, however, irregular, and too often citations are drawn from secondary works, even where primary sources are readily available. Kyle has done this at points with Calvin as well as Luther. Aside from this methodological flaw, the weaknesses of this book are few. They are not, however, insignificant. One wonders, for example, why Kyle admits that Knox was a biased historian and then remarks, "unbiased history is an eighteenth and nineteenth century development" (p. 13). This is a peculiar observation from one who obviously is well informed about the canons of critical historiography. Kyle surely must know that there is no such thing as unbiased historical writing, and the leading authors of that era wrote within the *Weltanschauung* derived from their own presuppositions.

In places it appears that Kyle is poorly informed about areas of Reformation history that relate indirectly but importantly to his subject. This is evident in his appraisal of Anabaptist soteriology. He contends that the

Anabaptists "did not repudiate the Lutheran doctrine of justification but rather attempted to read a stronger ethical content into it" (p. 96). It is misleading to argue that disagreement between Lutherans and Anabaptists over this concept was principally one of emphasis. Mennonite scholars such as Robert Friedmann (*The Theology of Anabaptism* [Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1973]), and Walter Klaassen, ed. (*Anabaptism in Outline* [Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1981]), have shown that the leading Anabaptist preachers of the sixteenth century were synergists who did not regard justification as a *forensic* act of God, while Kenneth R. Davis (*Anabaptism and Asceticism* [Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1974]), has argued convincingly that Anabaptist soteriology was closer to the position of late medieval Catholicism than it was to the *sola fide* of the Protestant reformers.

Despite the author's inadequate grasp of the Anabaptist doctrine of salvation and his sometimes ungrammatical style of writing, this is a fine book. Kyle is at his best in relating the teachings of Knox across the spectrum of theology. He shows keen understanding and penetrating insight into the thinking of Knox and his significance in the Scottish Reformation. His treatment of Knox as a "prophet" is especially interesting, and it leads this reviewer to ask if Knox flirted with extrabiblical revelation! Perhaps Kyle would like to address this question in an essay intended for publication in a scholarly journal.

The Mind of John Knox is likely to remain the definitive treatment of this subject for a long time to come. Congratulations to the author for supplying a long-standing need in Reformation studies.

JAMES E. MCGOLDRICK
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

Chronological and Background Charts of Church History, by Robert C. Walton. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. 84 charts. \$8.95. Paper.

How is one to get a grasp of nineteen hundred years of church history? Many survey volumes are available on the subject. Some of these studies utilize charts to simplify certain segments of church history. Walton has produced a book of eighty-four charts which, used in conjunction with a good textbook on church history, can help the reader to gain a summary knowledge of the subject. I would emphasize that this work must be used along with a text, for it simply presents charts without narrative. This book is a supplement, not an authoritative source.

The charts provide helpful syntheses of the ancient councils of the church, identification of various leaders in the church (with their essential ideas), and a summary of the first seven crusades. A disproportionate amount of space is given to the American church (twenty-four of the eighty-four charts). Such an emphasis is understandable since the book is published for an American readership. Especially helpful are the "family trees" of nine American church groups.

In any collection such as this, questions can be raised about the author's methodology in selecting what data to present. The field of study is so broad

that abbreviation is necessary. It is interesting that in a publication emphasizing American church history, under the heading of "Prominent Roman Catholic Missionaries" there is no mention of those who brought that tradition to North America. The presentation of "Notable Protestant Historians of the Church" omits the name of George P. Fisher. Along with the names of prominent American Puritans are listed several of their important writings. Roger Williams is one of the Puritans listed, but his significant work, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution*, is not listed as one of the important writings.

Some identifications can be challenged. J. Ross Stevenson is incorrectly presented as a liberal in the Modernist versus Fundamentalist controversy in the Presbyterian Church. Not even J. Gresham Machen, who often opposed Stevenson on the Princeton Seminary faculty, called Stevenson a liberal. He was recognized widely as an Evangelical. The distinctives listed as part of "The Radical Reformation" are not related directly to particular movements or persons. One could wrongly conclude that all Anabaptists agreed with all of the distinctives. For example, it is inappropriate to conclude that Balthasar Hubmaier was a pacifist. The identification of some as "heretics" in the early church causes one to desire a definition of heretic.

These problems substantiate the claim that these charts can be used as a helpful study aid only in conjunction with a good textbook. They can also serve as a means of bringing to remembrance previously gained knowledge.

RONALD T. CLUTTER

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Windows to the World: Literature in Christian Perspective, by Leland Ryken. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985. Pp. 194. \$7.95. Paper.

Clearly a manifesto for a specifically Christian response to literature, this book articulates a much-needed statement regarding the place of literature in the Christian life. Ryken argues that we not only look *at* literature, but we also look *through* literature at life. It is a "window to the world" (p. 15), or, as C. S. Lewis puts it, "My own eyes are not enough for me, I will see through those of others" (*An Experiment in Criticism*, cited by Ryken, p. 129). Literature refracts, rather than reflects, life; it is a "distorting mechanism" (p. 56). The implications of this refractive process are many and are the subject of the book.

This book is not a scholarly analysis with exhaustive citations of the literature in the field. The author finds his way through the maze of current literary theory with astonishing ease, nodding only in passing to the Structuralists and Deconstructionists. This is not a criticism of the book, especially insofar as Ryken and the Christian Free University Curriculum editors clearly have in mind a general audience. The approach that Ryken takes is in keeping with the purpose of the book, which is to provide an apology for literature in the Christian experience, not a critique of modern literary theories. In a methodological departure (but not a philosophical shift) from his earlier book, *Triumphs of the Imagination* (1979), Ryken holds in this latest book to a *reader-response* position, because it

has produced the best opportunity in recent history for Christian readers/critics to get a fair hearing in the academic world. Christians are not asking for a privilege that others do not also expect, namely, the right to respond to literature in terms of who they really are [p. 126].

Certainly, Ryken's moderate voice here will gain for the book an audience comprised of Christians and non-Christians alike; surely both groups of readers need to know something about the relationship between literature and faith.

The relationship between "sacred" and "secular" writings is an old question. Augustine and Calvin both wrestled with the issue of the relationship of the classics with biblical revelation, though they came to different conclusions. Milton's Son of God in *Paradise Regained* interacts more significantly with this question than he does with any other of Satan's temptations. Entering the arena on the side of the theists, Ryken argues emphatically that literature is "good" for its readers because it provides concrete images (p. 19); because it is experiential (p. 20); because it teaches indirectly (p. 21); and because it interprets life (p. 21), heightening and expressing perceptions of life to be considered objectively (pp. 27-28). None of these claims prove that literature is uniquely valuable to a Christian, merely that it may be valuable to anyone. For a Christian, Ryken argues, literature is "good" because "the Bible is in large part literary in nature" (p. 32).

In chap. 2, "Imagination: The *Lie* that Tells the Truth," Ryken addresses the difficult question of the various types of truth in literature. To this reader's satisfaction, the author holds here to a balanced view that is thoroughly defensible biblically. He warns that a reader will not always find truth in literature: "the arts do not always or necessarily or inherently or universally tell the truth. The imagination *did not escape the effects of the Fall*" (p. 50). A reader cannot depend upon finding truth in literature; he must discover truth in the Bible, then examine literature in the light of that truth. But there is another side to the matter: literature *may* tell the truth. And, at times, it does. Relying heavily on Northrop Frye (*The Educated Imagination* and *The Great Code*), Ryken notes that the world of literature is "a concrete human world of immediate experience" (Frye, *Imagination*, cited by Ryken, p. 37) in which is found universal truths of the human condition. This is the historic Aristotelian position, updated by Ryken through Frye. Perhaps the least satisfactory section of this chapter is the rather mundane list of archetypes (pp. 46-48) that the author cites to validate his claim that literature deals with quintessentially human matters. Ryken bolsters his argument for the value of archetypal truth by citing the creativity (even the imaginativeness) of God (p. 57) and the literary form of much of the Bible (p. 58).

When he turns to the value of literature as a leisure activity, Ryken builds his case on the creativity and beauty of God. Chap. 3, "Literature as Recreation," is not only the chapter which will interest the greatest number of readers, but it is also one of the book's most compelling:

Every well-balanced person devotes time to leisure pursuits. The question then becomes, What constitutes a *worthwhile* use of leisure time? There is no one right answer. But . . . literature has much to commend it as a leisure

activity. In a day of mindless leisure pursuits, literature stands out by engaging our mind. It awakens our imagination and frees us from our own time and place. It enriches our life by making us aware of the world within and without. It makes us sensitive to human experience and human fears and longings (in other words, basic human nature) [pp. 69-70].

There is a human compulsion to enjoy literature, as these words attest; man is enriched by the imaginative experience of human joys and sorrows. But Ryken cites the character of God in presenting a more legitimate explanation as to why literature is to be enjoyed. "Beauty," he writes, "is divine in origin" (p. 74). The ability to enjoy beauty, Ryken argues, is theistic; that is, we can enjoy beauty because God is beautiful, and he created us in his image. "Scripture tells us," Ryken states, "that people are created in the image of God. This means . . . that they have the ability to make something beautiful and to delight in it. *This is the biblical aesthetic*" (p. 77).

With chaps. 4 and 5, the author enters a current literary debate concerning the relationship of the writer with his text, and of the reader with the text. Current literary theory is in a state of chaos. Most literary theorists hold to a Structuralist view of linguistics, thereby denying that there is any possibility for objective understanding of a literary text; the Deconstructionists have gone so far as to assert that there is no antecedent meaning in a text, and that the "good" reader, therefore, creates his own meaning for a text. How can a Christian literary theorist hold exclusively to either of these views? By the very issue he addresses here, Ryken has a dilemma on his hands. In an ironic reversal, Ryken summons the secular critic's own standard, *pluralism*, to his service. He grants himself the prerogative to analyze literature from whatever position he wishes. Of course, he bestows the same privilege on every Christian literary critic. By espousing critical pluralism as the entrée by which a Christian can appreciate literature, Ryken ironically locks his own critical stance into one approach. He shifts significantly from the formalism and archetypalism of *Triumphs of the Imagination* (1979) to a reader-response approach to literary criticism in this book. His position is patent: "Unless the reader fills those words [that is, the words of the author in a text] with content, no literary process occurs" (p. 112). The phrasing here suggests to this reader that Ryken holds that the reader creates a significant portion of the meaning of a literary text. To grant that a reader creates meaning, if this is what the author intends in this book, is close to critical solipsism. Surely there is a more objective means of understanding meaning and a more categorical linguistic theory upon which to base analysis of a literary text. To be fair to Ryken, he does attempt to balance his comments on the reader's interpretive activity by insisting that the text is the final tribunal of meaning: "having emphasized the subjective element in reading, I must urge a caution. Readers do not have a right to make a work say anything they wish to see in the work" (p. 125). This caveat is important, for in it Ryken implies (and he immediately elaborates specifically) that the author's intention is the final authority in interpreting a literary text. Ryken touches on a major issue in modern literary theory and in hermeneutics here: in E. D. Hirsch's terms, the difference between *meaning* and *significance*. Unfortunately, however, Ryken does not acknowledge the crux and thereby fails to alert his readers to the dilemma they face.

Chap. 6 is a refreshing examination of the subject of "world view" in literature. Ryken avoids the pretentious terms of current literary theory, such as "paradigm" and its synonyms, turning instead to a comprehensible statement of how an author interprets reality in his work. "In kernel form," Ryken writes, "a world view is a coherent view of life made up of basic assumptions and an integrating central value" (p. 136). It includes, he notes, the author's basic premises regarding the three subjects of reality, morality, and values (p. 38). A world view is an integrating principle in a work of literature, a perception of the world from a particular perspective that synthesizes the imaginative world in the work. Ryken's comments on the subject of world view are particularly incisive, consciously predicated on a theistic world view, which he outlines briefly (pp. 145-46). For this reader, this chapter is one of the most satisfying in the book, bearing as it does on the central issue for a Christian literary critic of biblical integration; Ryken's understanding of integration has always been a hallmark of his writing.

The final chapter of *Windows to the World* deals with the ever vexing issue of morality in literature. In a day when secularists and theists charge one another with subverting school textbooks with their dogmas, imaginative literature draws more charges than any other type of written literature. Because literature deals with human nature and human experience in a fallen world, it is particularly vulnerable to moral abuse. On what basis does a Christian reader determine a book to be immoral or undesirable? How is he to judge? Not everyone will agree with Ryken's guidelines in this matter, though he cautions that what he suggests about morality in literature must be read in the context of the book at large. Briefly, he notes two areas of paramount importance in literature that affect the question of its morality: the moral issues in the work, and their effects on the reader (p. 158). Ryken adduces a series of ways in which a work of imaginative literature can be either moral or immoral (pp. 163-64), thereby providing guidelines that each reader may apply for himself. Ryken deals tastefully with the issue of literature and morality, never violating the reader's responsibility to judge for himself whether or not a work of literature is immoral.

Windows to the World: Literature in Christian Perspective is a significant book. Published at a time when literary criticism is surely at its nadir in this country, it provides the outlines of the way back. By avoiding the solipsism of such current literary theorists as Derrida and his progeny, Ryken strikes a blow for the shareability of imaginative literature on the basis of our common humanity. Further, Ryken predicates the validity of the "dialogue" between reader and writer on the creativity of God and the derived creativity of man as created in God's image. He strikes a felicitous balance throughout the book, never guilty of the Augustinian or Arnoldian errors: he neither dismisses literature as hopelessly pernicious, nor does he adulate it as a new religion for our day.

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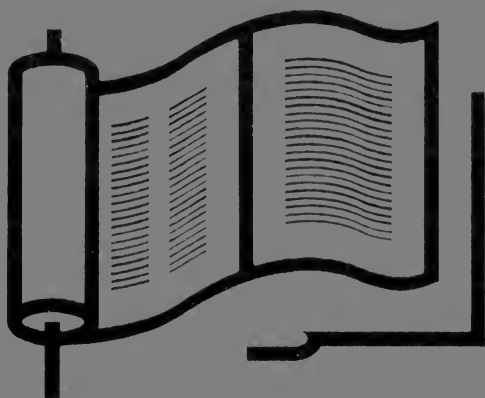
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THE PSALM OF HABAKKUK

RICHARD D. PATTERSON

Thematically, textually, and literarily, the psalm of Habakkuk (3:3-15) differs markedly from the material in the rest of the book. Translation and subsequent analysis of the psalm reveal that it is a remnant of epic literature, and as such it focuses on the theme of the heroic. Throughout the passage, God is the hero whose actions divide the psalm into two parts. The first poem (vv 3-7) relates the account of an epic journey as God guides his people toward the land of promise. In the second poem (vv 8-15), God's miraculous acts in the conquest period are rehearsed. The singing of these two epic songs was designed to evoke in the listeners a response of submission to Israel's Redeemer. Habakkuk's own response (in vv 16-19) illustrates the proper movement toward Israel's grand and heroic Savior.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

AN enigmatic psalm of praise occupies the greater portion of the third chapter of Habakkuk's prophecy¹ and exhibits striking differences from the preceding two chapters. Thematically, the first two chapters are largely narrative, recording Habakkuk's great perplexities (1:2-4, 12-17) and God's detailed responses (1:5-11; 2:1-20); whereas, with the third chapter, a positive tone emerges in the

¹W. F. Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Dedicated to T. H. Robinson*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950) 1, notes, "The Psalm of Habakkuk, with its magnificent but often obscure imagery has attracted many generations of scholars to its study." Despite scholarly scrutinizing, Habakkuk 3 has defied a final solution. B. Margulis, "The Psalm of Habakkuk: A Reconstruction and Interpretation," *ZAW* 82 (1970) 411, well remarks, "The numerous treatments of the problems involved, in whole or in part, attest scholarly interest while the serious divergences of opinion and conclusion indicate the need and desirability of a new approach." (Note that Margulis includes an excellent bibliography of studies on Habakkuk 3, pp. 440-41.) Although the observations that follow make no claim to be a final solution of all the problems in the tantalizingly difficult poetic material in Hab 3:3-15, it is hoped that they will demarcate some elements that will point toward their final solution.

prophet's great prayer of praise of God. The first two chapters are written in the usual classical Hebrew that was prevalent in the seventh century B.C., whereas the psalm of chap. 3 utilizes older literary material that had been passed down since Moses' day. Furthermore these two sections are written in distinctively different literary vehicles. The first two chapters were composed largely in literary forms that are typical of prophecy such as oracles, laments, and woes. However, the psalm of Hab 3:3-15 is written in an older poetic format that contains some very difficult Hebrew grammatical constructions and very rare words.

These factors, plus the inclusion of several musical notations (3:1, 3, 9, 13, 19) and the exclusion of the third chapter from the Peshier Habakkuk of the Qumranic corpus, convinced many liberal scholars that Habakkuk 3 is not an authentic work of the prophet but is made up of several independent units that had been united with the prophet's own writings.² However, although it may deny the unity of Habakkuk, current critical scholarship tends to consider the resultant canonical book of Habakkuk to be the work of the prophet. Thus, Eissfeldt remarks,

We must therefore regard the book of Habakkuk as a loose collection of a group of songs of lamentation and oracles (i, 2-ii, 4), a series of six cries of woe (ii, 5-20), and the prayer of iii, which all stem from the same prophet Habakkuk, probably a cult-prophet, and originated in approximately the same period.³

Leaving aside matters of authorship, date, and composition, this article will address specifically Habakkuk's psalm in 3:3-15. Having looked at the text and noted some of its distinctive difficulties, an analysis of its grammatical, literary, historical, and theological features will be undertaken. A discussion of the identity of the literary

²See J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament* (3rd ed.; New York: Columbia University, 1962) 151. Actually more than just Hab 3:3-15 has been denied, at times, as being genuine, some going as far as Marti who felt that only seven verses in the entire book were genuinely the work of the prophet (cf. H. D. Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1979] 344). See further, R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 932-37.

³O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 420. This writer believes that a good case can be made for Habakkuk's authorship of the entire three chapters thematically, historically, and contextually. See the remarks in the Introduction to the "Commentary on Habakkuk" in the forthcoming *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. W. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker). In the translation and discussion below, recourse will be made at times to the principle of the phonetic consonantism of the MT. For details as to phonetic consonantism, see F. J. Cross, Jr., *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1950) 59-61.

genre of Habakkuk's psalm will follow, together with an examination of its literary dependence on other poetic works of the same genre in the literature of the ancient Near East. The closing summation and conclusions will consider the significance of the psalm for the prophet.

TRANSLATION AND NOTES

Translation

3. Eloah came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount Paran.
His glory covered the heavens
And his praise filled the earth.
4. His brightness was like the light;
Rays (flashed) from his very own hand
That were from the inner recesses of his strength.
5. Plague went before him
And pestilence went out from his feet.
6. He stood and shook the earth;
He looked and made the nations to tremble.
The everlasting hills were shattered;
The eternal hills were made low
—His eternal courses.
7. I looked on Tahath-Aven
The tents of Cushan were trembling,
The tent curtains of the land of Midian.
8. Oh, Lord, were you angry with the rivers,
Or was your wrath against the streams,
Or your fury against the sea
When you were mounted upon your horses,
Your chariots of salvation?
9. You laid bare your bow;
You were satisfied with the club which you commanded.
10. The earth was split with rivers;
The mountains saw you, they trembled.
Torrents of water swept by;
The deep gave its voice;
It lifted its hands on high.
11. Sun and moon stood still in their lofty height;
They proceeded by the light of your arrows,
By the flash of the lightning, your spear.
12. In indignation you tread upon the earth;
In anger you trampled the nations.
13. You went out to save your people,

- To deliver your anointed.
 You smashed the head of the house of evil;
 You stripped him from head to foot;
 14. You split his head with his own club.
 His leaders stormed out;
 To scatter the humble was their boast,
 Like devouring the poor in secret.
 15. You tread upon the sea with your horses,
 Heaping up the many waters.

Notes

Verse Three

The interchangeability of the three OT words for God אֱלֹהִים, אֱלֹהֵי, and אֱלֹהִי makes any precise distinction to be difficult at best. The use of the last word was predominant in the earlier periods, particularly in connection with Edomite Teman as shown by the frequency of its employment in the dialogue between Job and Eliphaz. Accordingly, Hummel may be correct in suggesting an association of this name for God particularly with that region.⁴ It occurs in other early literature in Deut 32:15, 17 and Ps 18:32 (Heb.; cf. Ps 114:7).

One might also construe the second line of v 3 as reading "and the holy ones from Mount Paran," taking the מ of Mount Paran with קדש, thus reading קדשים, and utilizing the preposition of line one for line two, as well.⁵ "Holy One" is a common epithet for Yahweh (cf. Job 6:10 with Lev 11:44). It was often used by Isaiah (e.g., 6:3) and has already been employed by Habakkuk (1:12).

Teman names the southernmost of Edom's two chief cities. Edom itself is also called Teman (Obad 9), the name stemming from a grandson of Esau (Gen 36:11, 15, 42; Jer 49:7, 20) whose descendants inhabited the area. (For the relationship Esau = Edom, see Gen 25:25, 30.) Edom was formerly called Mount Seir (Gen 36:8-9; Deut 2:12). Paran designates not only a mountain range west and south of Edom and northeast of Mount Sinai, but a broad desert area in the Sinai Peninsula. (For the juxtaposition of Seir and Paran, see Gen 14:6.) All three terms appear to be used as parallel names for the southern area that stretched as far as the Sinai Peninsula. Thus Deut 33:1-2a reads: "Yahweh came from Sinai; he beamed forth from Seir;

⁴Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh*, 461. See further, H. D. Preuss, *TDOT* 1.272; J. Scott, *TWOT* 1.43.

⁵For the presence of God's angels/holy ones in the movement from the south, see Deut 33:2b-3; for the use of double duty prepositions, see M. Dahood, *Psalms* (AB; Garden City, Doubleday, 1970) 3.435-37.

he shone from Mount Paran." The movement from the southeast is also mentioned in Judg 5:4-5,

"O Lord, when you went out from Seir,
When you marched from the land of Edom,
The earth shook, the heavens poured,
The clouds poured down water.
The mountains quaked before the LORD, the One of Sinai,
Before the LORD, the God of Israel."

and Ps 68:7-8 (Heb. 8-9),

When you went out before your people, O God,
When you marched through the wasteland,
The earth shook,
The heavens poured down rain."

The motif seems to be a key one in Israel's early epic tradition. Thus, Cross points out,

The relation of this motif, the march of Conquest, to the early Israelite cultus has been insufficiently studied. The last-mentioned hymn, Exodus 15, is rooted in the liturgy of the spring festival ("Passover" or Maṣṣōt), and it may be argued that it stems originally from the Gilgal cultus as early as the twelfth century B.C. It rehearses the story of the Exodus in the primitive form, the march of Conquest (13-18), and after the "crossing over," the arrival at the sanctuary (verses 13, 17).⁶

תְּהִלָּתוֹ is sometimes translated "splendor" rather than "praise" (see *BDB*, 240).

Verse Four

קִרְנִים / 'rays' comes from a root meaning "to shine." The noun is used primarily for the horns of various animals and hence becomes employed figuratively as a symbol for strength or power. The juxtaposition of radiance and power can be seen in the incident of the outshining of God's power through Moses' face (Exod 34:29). Both radiance and power seem to be clearly intended here. The dual form also controls the verb הִיָּה which takes the *t*-form common to older poetry.

⁶F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," in *Biblical Motifs*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1966) 25. Cross links this motif with the idea of kingship and suggests that both were utilized in the royal cultus (pp. 27-33). See further, R. Patterson, "The Song of Deborah," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, eds. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981) 130-31.

חִבְיוֹן is hapax legomenon from the root חָבָה / 'to hide'. The whole line is extremely difficult and has occasioned many suggestions and emendations. Some meaning, such as "secret place," "inner recesses," or "source," has usually been put forward here. Likewise, the preceding word שֵׁם can be variously pointed as שָׁם / 'there', שֵׁם / 'name', or שֵׁם / 'set'. Thus, the line could be translated variously: (1) "There was the hiding place of his might," (2) "(Its) name was 'The Source/Secret Place of his strength,'" or (3) "Set (there) from [utilizing the preposition from the preceding line] the inner recesses of his strength." The suggestion that would point the word as "name" would be in keeping with the ancient Near Eastern practice of naming weapons and essential features.⁷ The word may also be divided by adding the ם to the following word, yielding a still different result (see below).

It may be added that חִבְיוֹן has often been related to the root חָפַה/חָפָה / 'cover' and accordingly is translated "covering."⁸ Thus, the line would be translated, "And there is the covering of his power," or "The name of the covering is His Strength." If this latter suggestion is followed, the covering could be understood as an entourage. Thus, a smooth transition with v 5 could be gained by translating the troublesome line, "And his mighty ones were there as a covering" (i.e., encircling the divine king). So constructed, the thought parallels that of Deut 33:2, "He came with myriads of holy ones" (cf. Ps 68:18 [Heb.]). It is of interest to note that Cross employs the term חָכַב in this passage as a parallel to קְדָשִׁים / 'his holy ones.' If this meaning is allowed, then perhaps חִבְיוֹן could be normalized חִבּוֹן with a meaning something like "splendor" (cf. Akkadian *ēbebu* / 'be pure, clean', *ebbu* / 'polished, pure, shining, lustrous'). Hence, the line could be read in parallel with the preceding two, "There is the splendor of his might." However, since the Deuteronomy passage is beset with great difficulty and Cross's own handling of the text is colored by numerous conjectural emendations, this last translation must remain a pure conjecture. Hab 3:4b stands as a *crux interpretum*. Ultimately, one must determine (1) whether the line is best understood as a strict parallel to the previous two lines or as transitional between them and the two lines that follow, and (2) whether the contextual emphasis centers on the frequently stressed idea of the veiled presence of God⁹,

⁷See further, R. Patterson, "A Multiplex Approach to Psalm 45," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 29-48.

⁸See R. L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco: Word, 1984) 112; cf. M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 1980) 234.

⁹See S. L. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978) 69; cf. C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 2.99-100.

or is a literary borrowing of the familiar theme of the divine warrior moving amidst his heavenly armies that is adapted for Israelite cultic purposes,¹⁰ or is simply an expression of God's power as manifested in the natural world.

The translation followed here takes this line as parallel to the preceding two and views it as primarily a poetic expression of God's power in the natural world. The rendering given above is gained by separating the מ from the word and viewing the remaining ש as a relative particle preceded by a pleonastic waw. The resultant tense stresses that the brilliant theophany originated in the inner recesses of the strength of him who is light (cf. 1 John 1:5).

Verse Five

The parallel lines here have often been taken as evidence for viewing Debir as an epithet or alternate name of Reshef, the well-known Canaanite god of pestilence and sterility.¹¹ Dahood calls attention to the set pairs קָרַן / פָּנִים in vv 4-5.¹² O'Connor translates לְפָנָי "at his face."¹³

Verse Six

וַיִּמְדֹּד has customarily been translated either "he measured" (*RSV*, *KJV*, *NKJV*; cf. *NASB*, "surveyed") or "shook" (*NIV*; cf. LXX ἐσαλεύθη). The inappropriateness of the former meaning has led most critical expositors to favor the latter meaning here. Scholars have suggested various byforms and alloforms to account for this understanding of מִדַּד: (1) מִדַּד = מִטַּט / 'crumble', 'set in reeling motion' (Keil), (2) מִדַּד = נִדַּד / נִדַּד / 'move', (cf. מִטַּט / מִטַּט / 'crumble,' נִטַּט / נִטַּט / 'shake' [Margulis]), and (3) Arabic مَدَا (*māda*) / 'was convulsed' (Driver).

Likewise, וַיִּתַּר has occasioned several translations: διέτακη / 'melt' (LXX), "drove asunder" (*KJV*), "startled" (*NASB*, *NKJV*), "shook" (*RSV*), and "made to tremble" (*NIV*). If the previous line is to be rendered "shook," the *NIV* translation is certainly most appropriate. If the traditional understanding of מִדַּד / 'measure' is retained, perhaps a root *tur* / 'spy out, survey' might be suggested for the form

¹⁰See F. M. Cross, Jr., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973) 100-105.

¹¹See W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969) 186. For the proposed Eblaite evidence, see the comments of Dahood in G. Pettinato, *The Archives of Elba* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981) 296.

¹²M. Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," in *Ras Shamra Parallels*, ed. Loren R. Fisher and Stan Rummel (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1972) 1.331.

¹³O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 235.

here. The force of the following couplet and the dire effects of the preceding two probably best favor a translation similar to that of the *NIV* for these two lines.

הָלִיכוֹת עוֹלָם לוֹ. The line is difficult. It has usually been translated by the English versions "His ways are everlasting/eternal." Albright suggested that the ל of the last word be combined with the first two words of v 7 to read לַתְּחִתָּאן, thus reading an energetic feminine plural of תָּתָא with emphatic ל. ¹⁴ So constructed, the newly constituted line would be translated "Eternal orbits were shattered." While this suggestion is attractive and involves no consonantal revision, it would leave a metrical imbalance in vv 6b and 7, which appear to be formed as a 3/3/3 pattern. Further, MT does yield a reasonable sense as "his eternal courses." The meaning would be that the ancient hills and mountains, now convulsing before the approaching theophany, had formed the time-honored paths of God (cf. Amos 4:13). Surely such a poetic figure is most apropos for him who is called "The Rider on the Clouds" (Ps 68:5 [Heb.]; cf. Isa 19:1) or "He who rides the Heavens" (Deut 33:26; cf. Ps 68:34 [Heb.]). The syntax of the line is reminiscent of Num 23:22b: לוֹ כְּתוּעָפֹת רָאָם לוֹ (cf. Ps 18:8 [Heb.]: לוֹ כִּי-תָרָה לוֹ).

Verse Seven

The first line of v 7 is another extremely difficult sentence to interpret. The line has frequently been taken with the first two words of the second line, leaving the last word of line two to be constructed with line three. While this makes for a smooth translation, "I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: / And the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble (*NIV*)," it leaves an unusually long pair of lines: 5/4. Despite the difficulty of MT, it seems best to retain the more customary reading with its 3/3/3 meter. The troublesome תַּחַת אֹנֶן can be translated by the usual "in distress/affliction," but may perhaps be better taken as a geographical name paralleling Cushan and Midian in lines two and three. Perhaps it may have been a name employed by the Hebrew poet to describe the general area where the enigmatic Cushan (= Egyptian Kushu?) and Midian were located, that is, the southern part of the broad area that stretched from the Sinai Peninsula northward into Transjordan. If so, the whole verse forms a geographic inclusio with v 3. ¹⁵

¹⁴ Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," 15.

¹⁵ Note that תַּחַת appears as a geographical name in Num 33:26, 27. אֹנֶן-type forms occur as personal names and geographical names in the OT (e.g., Num 16:1; Ezra 2:33; Neh 6:2; 7:37; 11:35; Amos 1:5; cf. Gen 36:23; 38:4, 8, 9, etc.). If תַּחַת־אֹנֶן is to be taken as a geographical name, אֹנֶן- may be associated with a noun meaning "vigor" or "wealth" coming from a second homophonous root to that of the usual noun translated "trouble" or "wickedness" or "distress." The easy confusion between the two words

The presence of רָאִיתִי here, a source of concern to many commentators, may be explained by recalling the similar employment of this verb in the Balaam oracles (Num 23:9; 24:17). Indeed, the poet may have intended a deliberate pun or literary allusion to Num 23:21, "He has not seen distress/wickedness in Jacob; / Nor has he looked upon trouble in Israel."

Verse Eight

Many have pointed out the familiar Ugaritic parallelism here of נָהָר/יָם.¹⁶ The reason for their employment here is an interpretive problem that will be discussed below.¹⁷ Dahood also calls attention to the use of סוּס/מֶרְכָבוֹת here.¹⁸ The final noun has been taken as standing at the end of a broken construct chain by Freedman.¹⁹

Verse Nine

The question of whether תַּעֲזֹר should be viewed as second masculine singular or third feminine singular is conditioned by the understanding of the parallel line. Albright decides for the former and translates "Bare dost Thou strip Thy bow";²⁰ Keil follows the latter course: "Thy bow lays itself bare."²¹ The second line is particularly troublesome. Indeed, Margulis laments, "The second hemistich is patently impossible."²² A perusal of the various ancient and modern versions, as well as the commentators, shows the difficulties under which the translators labored. No consensus as to the translation has been reached. Laetsch points out that by his day Delitzsch had counted more than one hundred different interpretations of this difficult line.²³

That the divine warrior's weapons are taken in hand is clear from the parallel pair מִטָּה/קֶשֶׁת.²⁴ The use of such special weapons are

may possibly have been viewed as a literary pun: תַּחְתָּאוֹן / 'wealthy place' is seen as 'in distress.'

¹⁶For example, Cross, *Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 140 and Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," 1.203.

¹⁷See below. See further, A. Cooper, "Divine Names and Epithets in the Ugaritic Texts," in *Ras Shamra Parallels*, 3.375.

¹⁸Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," 1.284; for רַכֵּב, see Patterson, "Psalm 45," 37 n. 35.

¹⁹D. N. Freedman, "The Broken Construct Chain," *Biblica* 53 (1972) 535.

²⁰Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," 12.

²¹Keil, *Minor Prophets*, 2.103.

²²Margulis, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," 420.

²³T. Laetsch, *Bible Commentary: The Minor Prophets* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956) 347.

²⁴See Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," 1.258. The final ת in מִטָּה is the common Canaanite feminine singular.

familiar from the literature of the ancient Near East. Thus Ward remarks, "Syrian and Hittite art frequently represents *Adad-Ramman*, god of storm, as armed with the same weapons, while the Babylonian art gave this western god the forked thunderbolt."²⁵ Good sense can be gained by following Albright's lead in repointing MT שָׁבַעַת as a second masculine singular perfect from שָׁבַעַ (although Albright needlessly takes the following *maṭṭôt* from ESA *mṭw* / 'fight',²⁶) yielding a rendering that is reminiscent of Anat's fighting as recorded in the Baal cycle, "Anat fought hard and gazed (on her work), she battled . . . until she was sated, fighting in the palace. . . ." ²⁷ As for the final אֶמֶר, one may take the word possibly as the name of God's war club, the noun coming from a verbal root מָרַר / 'drive out.'²⁸ If so, it could be a veiled reflection or scribal pun on Baal's war weapon Aymur ("Expeller").²⁹ Perhaps the simplest solution is achieved, however, by viewing the final t of *maṭṭôt* as a double duty consonant and translating the line "You were satisfied with the club which you commanded."³⁰ Thus, there is probably a reminiscence of God's promise to defend his people as given in Deut 32:40–42.

Verses Nine-c through Eleven

The first line (v 9c) has been translated by taking "earth" as either the subject or the object of the sentence. Because the second masculine singular verbal suffix is read in the following line, it seems best to retain the traditional understanding of תִּבְקַעַ as a second masculine singular verb and view "earth" as its object. Earth and mountains are found in parallel in several texts commemorating this event (e.g., Judg 5:5; Ps 18:8 [Heb.]).³¹ The scene depicted here is

²⁵W. H. Ward, *Habakkuk* (ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1911) 23. See also Patterson, "Psalm 45," 38–39.

²⁶Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," 15.

²⁷See G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956) 84–85.

²⁸See C. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1965) 3.356.

²⁹Ibid., 2.180.

³⁰For the use of double duty consonants, see I. O. Lehman, "A Forgotten Principle of Biblical Textual Tradition Rediscovered," *JNES* 26 (1967) 93; cf. Dahood, *Psalms*, 2.81, 3.371. For asyndetic subordination, see R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax* (Toronto: Toronto University, 1976) 90; Dahood, *Psalms*, 3.426–27; and A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958) 191–92. For the corresponding Akkadian construction, see W. von Soden, *Grundriss des akkadischen Grammatik* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1952) 219.

³¹Several other parallel terms common to Ugaritic and Hebrew have been suggested as present here by Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," 1.177–78, 218, 372–73: חֶזַע / יר, נָחַן / נש, קוֹל / תהוֹם, (although LXX may be right in finding the parallel of תהוֹם as רום).

recounted in detail also in Pss 18:8–16 (Heb.); 77:17–19 (Heb.); and 144:5–6 (cf. Judg 5:4–5).

The lack of metrical balance at the end of v 10 and the beginning of v 11 has occasioned several suggestions as to the division of the lines. Dahood takes רַם with the first line of v 10b and reads “The abyss gave forth its haughty voice.”³² Albright takes the שָׁמַשׁ of v 11 with v 10 and translates “The Exalted One, Sun, raised its arms.”³³ The translation adopted here takes שָׁמַשׁ-יָרֵךְ as one composite name, formed perhaps as a result of a deletion transformation so as to achieve the desired three poetic lines. The juxtaposition of sun and moon participating in earthly events is noted elsewhere (e.g., Josh 10:12–13; Isa 13:10; Joel 2:10; 3:4, etc.). The words are, of course, familiar set terms.³⁴

Smith calls attention to the fact that זִכְל used here for the dwelling place for the sun and moon, is usually reserved for the “exalted dwelling place of God.”³⁵ Since sun and moon are reported as being among the heavenly retinue, they may also be viewed as being where God dwells.³⁶

Verse Twelve

The parallel pair אֶרֶץ/עַם appears elsewhere of God’s indignation against his enemies (e.g., Isa 30:27). Especially instructive is Isa 10:5 where not only is this pair found, but מִטָּה (Hab 3:9) also appears: “Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath.” For אֶרֶץ employed for God’s going out to fight on behalf of his people, see Judg 5:4 and Isa 42:13.

Verse Thirteen

חַסֵּם may be another example of an intrusive element within a construct chain.³⁷ Pusey, however, translates it as the preposition

³²M. Dahood, “The Phoenician Contribution to Biblical Wisdom Literature,” in *The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilizations*, ed. William A. Ward (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1968) 140.

³³Albright, “The Psalm of Habakkuk,” 12.

³⁴For the use of fixed pairs of set terms, see S. Gervitz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1963) 2–4, 10–14; and Y. Avishur, “Word Pairs Common to Phoenician and Biblical Hebrew,” *UF* 7 (1975) 13–47, esp. p. 19. Note, however, the caution of P. C. Craigie, “Parallel Words in the Song of Deborah,” *JETS* 20 (1977) 15–22. For the participation of other celestial phenomena in earthly events, see Judg 5:20; Isa 60:19–20 and the remarks of P. C. Craigie, “Three Ugaritic Notes on the Song of Deborah,” *JSOT* 2 (1977) 33–49.

³⁵Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 114.

³⁶See the discussion of J. Gamberoni, *TDOT* 4.29–31; see also H. Wolf, *TWOT* 1.235.

³⁷Freedman, “The Broken Construct Chain,” 535, remarks, “The meaning must be: ‘for the salvation of your people/for the salvation of your anointed.’ Apparently the

"with," while Dahood suggests that לְיִשָּׁע / 'for the salvation of' be repointed to read לְיִשָּׁע / 'to save' (= a yiphal infinitive construct), a suggestion apparently followed by *NIV*. The following תָּא would thus become an expanded accusative particle after a causative verbal form.³⁸

The term מְשִׁיחָךְ / 'your anointed,' has been taken as referring either to the nation Israel (Ewald, Hitzig), Israel's Davidic king (R. Smith; cf. 2 Sam 23:1), or to the Messiah (Hailey, Keil, Laetsch, Von Orelli). The problem is largely an interpretive one. If the reference is primarily historical and has in view the era of the exodus and wilderness wanderings, the term must refer to Moses. Although "your anointed" seemingly forms a parallel to "your people," Israel is not elsewhere called by this term. Rather, "the anointed" is customarily reserved for individuals such as the high priest or the king (note also Cyrus, Isa 45:1). If Moses is intended, Pusey may be right in suggesting that the תָּא is to be taken as the preposition "with" (cf. Lat. Vg. *in salutem cum Christo tuo*), for God promised Moses that he would be with him (Josh 1:5; note, however, that the preposition there is עִמָּךְ).³⁹

Verses Thirteen-b through Fourteen-a

The three lines here have occasioned several difficulties, chief of which is the figure involved. Does God's smiting refer to the wicked enemy (Margulis), a mythological figure (Albright, Smith), or the enemy nation or armies viewed here under the figure of a house (Keil)? Since, as Cassuto points out, the verb חָחַק is commonly used in both Ugaritic and the OT to signify a blow that the divine warrior gives to his enemies, it seems best to translate the three lines as rendered in my translation given above (cf. *NIV*).⁴⁰ Such an understanding does away with the need for finding yet another broken construct chain in the first line as suggested by Freedman.⁴¹

second phrase is a construct chain, like the first, except that the intrusive לְ has been inserted between the construct and the absolute. Exactly what the לְ is it may be difficult to say: it may be the emphasizing particle, normally used to identify the definite direct object of a verb (here of the action), or it may be the pronoun written defectively, used here to call attention to the pronominal suffix attached to the following noun." For added discussion as to the broken construct chain, see A. C. M. Blommerde, "The Broken Construct Chain, Further Examples," *Biblica*, 55 (1974) 549–52. For a negative appraisal of the whole concept, see J. D. Price, "Rosh: An Ancient Land Known to Ezekiel," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 79–88.

³⁸For details, see E. B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953) 2.217; and M. Dahood, "Two Yiphal Causatives in Habakkuk 3, 13a," *OR* 48 (1979) 258–59.

³⁹For the interchange of תָּא and עִמָּךְ , see H. D. Preuss, *TDOT*, 1.449–58.

⁴⁰See U. Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973) 1.268.

⁴¹Freedman, "The Broken Construct Chain," 535.

עָרַת is doubtless to be construed as an infinitive absolute detailing the extended activity of the main verb.⁴²

Verse Fourteen

The last three lines of v 14 are exceedingly obscure. The position taken here suggests that there are three lines of text in a 2/3/3 pattern rather than the two lines of 3/4 as traditionally rendered. Key to the understanding is the dividing of לְחַפֵּי־עֲנִי into two words: פָּרַץ / 'scatter' and עָנִיעַ / 'humble' by viewing the צ as another example of a double duty consonant. The resultant translation yields not only better sense, but delivers a nice parallel between עָנִיעַ / 'humble' and עָנִי / 'poor.' So construed, עָנִיעַ would take its place alongside such words as אָבִיּוֹן in contexts with עָנִי.⁴³

Verse Fifteen

For the figure of God treading upon the sea, see Ps 77:20 (Heb.). סוֹסֵיף is an adverbial accusative absolute which, in compressed language, complements the action of the main verb and governs the sense of the following line. The preposition of line one is also to be understood in the second line.⁴⁴

ANALYSIS

Grammatical Features

The basic literary dichotomy between chaps. 1 and 2 and 3:3–15 has already been noted (see above). The data that support the archaic nature of 3:3–15 are presented here. First, it may be noted that there are numerous cases of defective spelling in the interior of words, as pointed out by Albright.⁴⁵ Next may be gathered the various archaic grammatical elements and poetic devices that occur: (1) the lack of the definite article throughout these verses, (2) the *t*-form imperfect used with duals or collectives (v 4), (3) the use of the old pronominal

⁴²See further, Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 38–39; and M. Hammershaimb, "On the So-called *Infinitivus Absolutus* in Hebrew," in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver*, ed. D. Winton Thomas and W. D. McHardy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 85–93.

⁴³Suitable parallels can be found in Pss 10:2, 8–10; 35:10; Prov 30:14, etc.

⁴⁴For details, see Dahood, *Psalms*, 3.436.

⁴⁵Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," 10. Albright also suggests the presence of an old energetic form with emphatic ל in vv 6–7: לְתַחַתָּאֵר / '(eternal orbits) were shattered.' It should also be noted that E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (4th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 114–15, follows the lead of K. Ellinger in translating the troublesome crux as the Ugaritic word for destruction preceded by the preposition ל. However, see the discussion above in n. 15.

suffix in ה (vv 4, 11), (4) the employment of enclitic *-m* (v 8),⁴⁶ (5) the frequent appearance of the old preterite prefix conjugation verb (vv 3–5, 7–12, 14) in variation with the suffix conjugation, (6) the use of the ל of possession in inverted predicate position in a non-verbal sentence (v 6), and (7) the use of structured tri-cola employing climactic parallelism (vv 4, 6b, 7, 8a, 10, 11, 13b) to mark major divisions (6b–7, 8) or subdivisions (vv 4, 10a, 11, 13b–14) within the poem.

As well, one may notice the use of parallel expressions and set terms held in common in Ugaritic and the corpus of old Hebrew poetry: אָרַץ/שָׁמַיִם (v 3), קָרָן/פָּנִים (vv 4–5), הָרִי־עַד/גִּבְעוֹת עוֹלָם (v 6), יָם/נָהָר (v 8), סוּס/מֶרְכָּבָה (v 8), קָשֶׁת/מִטָּה (v 9), נָתַן/נָשָׂא, תְּהוֹם/קוֹל (v 10), and חַץ/בֶּרֶק, שָׁמַשׁ/יָרֵחַ (v 11). Also to be noted is the utilization of a vocabulary commonly found in older poetic material in the OT: אֱלֹהִים (v 3), הוֹדָה (v 6), רָגַז (v 7), רָכַב (v 8), מִיָּם (v 8), הֶרֶם/פָּאָרֶן (v 3), הוֹדָה (v 6), אָזַן (v 7), אָף (v 12), מִטָּה (v 9), רָאָשׁ (v 14), and מִיָּם רַבִּים (v 15).⁴⁷

Literary Features

No less significant is the presence of several themes common to the body of Ugaritic and early OT poetic literature: (1) the Lord's movement from the southland (v 3); cf. Deut 33:1–2; Judg 5:4; Ps 68:8 [Heb.], (2) the presence of the heavenly assemblage (v 5; cf. Deut 33:2–3), (3) the shaking of the terrestrial and celestial worlds at God's presence (vv 6, 10–11; cf. Judg 5:4–5; Pss 18:8–9, 13–15 [Heb.]; 68:34 [Heb.]; 77:17–19 [Heb.]; 144:5–6), (4) the Lord's anger against sea and river (v 8; cf. Exod 15:8; Ps 18:8, 16 [Heb.]), (5) the Lord's presence riding the clouds (v 8; cf. Exod 15:4; Pss 18:11–12 [Heb.]; 68:5, 34 [Heb.]), (6) the fear of the enemy at the Lord's advance (vv 7, 10?; cf. Exod 15:14–16; Pss 18:8 [Heb.]; 77:17–19 [Heb.]), and (7) the Lord's fighting against the boastful (v 14; cf. Exod 15:9) enemy (vv 9, 11, 13–14; cf. Exod 15:3, 6; Ps 77:18 [Heb.]) so as to deliver his people (vv 13–15; cf. Pss 18:38–39, 41 [Heb.]; 68:8 [Heb.] with Exod 15:10, 12–13).⁴⁸

⁴⁶For enclitic *-m*, see M. Pope, "Ugaritic Enclitic *-m*," *JCS* 5 (1951) 123–28; H. D. Hummel, "Enclitic *MEM* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *JBL* 76 (1957) 85–106; and Dahood, *Psalms*, 3.408–9.

⁴⁷For the bearing of Ugaritic research upon biblical studies see P. C. Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 67–90, and his extensive bibliography, pp. 107–9. For the corpus of ancient OT poetry, see below.

⁴⁸See further Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," 8–9; *idem*, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 1–52, 183–93; Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 2.3–15, 16–59, 69–109; S. Rummel, "Narrative Structures in the Ugaritic Texts," in *Ras Shamra Parallels*, 3.233–84; and Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 91–194.

Historical/Theological Features

Having noted the archaic nature of the linguistic evidence concerning Hab 3:3–15, it is necessary to inquire further concerning historical and theological data that can be analyzed to help in ascertaining the setting of Habakkuk's psalmic material. The historical information is minimal, consisting of the notice of God's leading Israel (v 3) in her movement from the Transjordanian south—an advance that brought consternation to that entire area (v 7). The era involved in these verses, then, is obviously that of the period surrounding the exodus and Mount Sinai revelation and the movement to the Jordan River. This is further confirmed by the notice of the victory at the Red Sea (vv 14–15). Other possible historical reminiscences have been suggested for some of the intervening verses, such as the crossing of the Jordan or the Battle of Ta^canach (commemorated in Deborah's Song in Judges 5), but certainty is lacking in either of these proposals. It must be pointed out, however, that even though the time frame envisioned in these verses is that of the exodus and Israel's early movement toward the Land of Promise, the highly figurative nature of the poetry does not allow a precise identification as to the time of its original composition.

Much can be said with regard to theological data. Certainly the omnipotence and self-revelation of the invisible God of the universe are taught here. As well, his sovereign control of the physical world and his direct intervention into the historical affairs of mankind are in evidence. Moreover, his redemption of and continuing care for his people are distinctly underscored. However, because such theological information is found in many places in the OT, these data are not decisive in determining the date of the original composition of these verses. Nevertheless, the fact that the historical reflections and theological viewpoint are consistent with and, indeed, are dominant in the other early literature that forms parallels with these verses, and the fact that the grammatical and literary data are like those that are found in the early poetry of Israel argue for the presumption that these verses belong to that same literary cycle and commemorate the same occasion. If not written in the same era as the other poetic material and handed down to the prophet's day, the poetry found in Habakkuk's prophecy here is at least written in a consciously archaistic manner. The utilization of earlier traditional material is championed by Cassuto;⁴⁹ an archaistic style is favored by Albright.⁵⁰

I am convinced that Cassuto's position is essentially correct and that the substance of Habakkuk's poetry, though doubtless reworked

⁴⁹Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 2.73.

⁵⁰Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," 9.

by the prophet in accordance with the musical standards demanded for its employment in the cultus, was directly part of a living epic material handed down since the days of the exodus and its related events and, under divine inspiration, was incorporated by Habakkuk into his prophecy.

DISCUSSION

The Question of Literary Genre

It has been assumed to this point that the material in Hab 3:3-15 is epic in nature. The justification for this classification must now be considered. An epic is a long narrative poem that recounts heroic actions, usually connected with a nation's or people's golden age. As such, epic forms a distinct substratum within the class of heroic narrative.⁵¹ Epic literature usually finds its unifying factor in a central hero whose courageous, wise, altruistic, and virtuous actions are intended to be exemplary to subsequent generations. Thus, Ing remarks,

Its heroic nature is its prime essential and there is one meaning of "heroic" which remains constant throughout all local and temporal variations: the heroic standard of conduct means that a man cares for something beyond his own material welfare and is prepared to sacrifice for it comfort, safety and life itself; and his care for this "something" is active.⁵²

It is, therefore, highly didactic in purpose.

Stylistically, the exalted theme(s) and didactic material call forth the highest efforts of the poet so that the language and expressions become lofty in tone, or as Ryken puts it, "a consciously exalted mode of expression that removes the language from the commonplace."⁵³ To accomplish this goal, the poet makes special use of static epithets, standardized literary formulae, and a body of set terms that are not just easily memorized but are particularly designed to achieve a distinct effect commensurate with his purposes. Nilsson observes,

In the epical language of all peoples occurs a store of stock expressions, constantly recurring phrases, half and whole verses and even verse complexes; and repetitions are characteristic of the epic style. . . . The singer has a large store of poetical parts ready, and his art consists in coordinating these parts according to the course of

⁵¹See L. Ryken, *The Literature of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974) 81.

⁵²C. M. Ing, "Epic," in Cassell's *Encyclopaedia of Literature*, ed. S. H. Steinberg (London: Cassell & Company, 1953) 1.195-200.

⁵³Ryken, *The Literature of the Bible*, 81.

events and connecting them by the aid of new-made verses. A skilled poet is able to improvise a poem on every subject.⁵⁴

Accordingly, the epic poet's vocabulary is carefully drawn to emphasize such qualities as: magnificence and grandeur, awe-inspiring might and greatness, munificence and generosity, virility and valor, piety and wisdom, and a strong sense of personal commitment even to the point of complete self-sacrifice. Commensurate with these idealized qualities, the epic plot is usually sublimated to the character of its hero. The action of the narrative, while filled with such things as exciting adventures, perilous wanderings, and colossal battles, is nonetheless usually merely an instrument of focusing on the hero himself whose laudatory conduct both emphasizes the significance of life's quest and provides for future generations a model for the challenges experienced by all men. Tillyard comments,

The epic writer must express the feelings of a large group of people living in or near his own time. The notion that the epic is primarily patriotic is an unduly narrowed version of this requirement. . . . The epic must communicate the feeling of what it was like to be alive at the time.⁵⁵

The hero, then, is man written large.

The structure of epic is often like a great arch through which on one side the past may be seen, on the other the future. . . . While epic raises its figures to astounding heroic stature, it never makes them strange by eccentricity. They may be giants but they retain the form and blood of the family of man.⁵⁶

In turning to the epic literature of the classical world, certainly this feature is central in the Homeric epics. As Flacelière points out,

Homer bequeathed to future generations the ideal type of Greek man (if we accept subtlety and a tendency to deception as part of such a character); and perhaps the ideal type of all men (provided one regards as a virtue prudence, which, in cases of extremity, is not above lying).⁵⁷

To be sure, Homer's heroes play out their earthly roles in the face of a heavenly family of deities whose own selfishness often causes them

⁵⁴M. P. Nilsson, *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology* (New York: Norton, 1932) 19.

⁵⁵E. M. W. Tillyard, *The English Epic and Its Background* (New York: Oxford University, 1966) 12.

⁵⁶Ing, "Epic," I.197.

⁵⁷R. Flacelière, *A Literary History of Greece*, trans. Douglas Garman (Chicago: Aldine, 1964) 38.

to intervene on the stage of man's affairs in a capricious and cruel manner.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, this time-honored struggle⁵⁹ was all to man's own betterment, for the harshness of life brought on by the heavenly fates provided man with a training ground for keeping in proper tension⁶⁰ the twin virtues of heroism and obedience on the one hand, and an often violent virility blended at times with a touching tenderness on the other. The balanced man must learn to live the full life of human potential.

In the midst of the catastrophes decreed by the gods, the best men are capable of great actions, though at the cost of infinite affliction. . . . Thus Homer sets before the Greeks the twofold ideal of the hero-sage. In his two poems he exalts the clear-sighted energy of men who, without illusions, struggle with their tragic destinies, with no real and constant help save what they find in themselves, in "the greatness of their hearts".⁶¹

Much of this was passed on to the classical Latin world where it was reshaped to fit the Roman mold. Hadas shows that Vergil "crowns his work and Latin literature with an epic which would be inconceivable without the models of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*."⁶² It was the latter epic that had the place of prominence for the great Latin poet, for

there were familiar elements sure to appeal to the Roman—the spectacle of endurance in the face of danger, the love of home, the fear of the gods, the sombre religious associations with the lower world. Odysseus was a hero more after the Roman heart than Achilles, and Virgil shows this in his modelling of Aeneas.⁶³

⁵⁸See Flacelière's extended discussion, *ibid.*, 46–50. See also, H. C. Baldry, *Ancient Greek Literature in Its Living Context* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968) 18–23.

⁵⁹Nilsson, *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, 12–34, points out that Homer was an heir to a heroic tradition that stretched back to the Middle Helladic Age of Mycenae. D. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley: University of California, 1963) demonstrates that there is an essential core of historical trustworthiness as to the Mycenaean Age in the Homeric Iliad. Note, for example, his extended discussions on pp. 134–47 and pp. 218–96.

⁶⁰W. C. Stephens, ed., *The Spirit of the Classical World* (New York: Capricorn, 1967), 14, remarks, "The gods were in charge of life—there was no doubt of that—and man could expect to suffer a good deal from them. But the Greeks combined this attitude with an intense joy in living, for they did not regard themselves as playthings of a despotic destiny. They were shapers of their own lives, within a framework set by the gods, and took a fierce pride in human accomplishments even while they recognized their vulnerability. It is this tension which makes Greek tragedy the profound and moving form of art it is."

⁶¹Flacelière, *A Literary History of Greece*, 59.

⁶²M. Hadas, *A History of Latin Literature* (New York: Columbia University, 1952) 11.

⁶³J. W. Duff, *A Literary History of Rome*, ed. A. M. Duff (3rd ed.; London: Ernest Benn, 1953) 91.

However, Vergil's genius may be seen in his psychologically penetrating advance on the concept of heroism. Thus, Bowra rightly points out,

In the Aeneid Vergil presented a new ideal of heroism and showed in what fields it could be exercised. The essence of his conception is that a man's *virtus* is shown less in battle and physical danger than in the defeat of his own weaknesses.⁶⁴

Still further, Vergil emphasized that man's *virtus* became perfected not only through courage, cunning, and the conquest of self, but through suffering:

Vergil . . . has a profound sympathy for suffering and sorrow and a conviction that it is through suffering that man reaches the depths of religious experience. It is through sacrifice and suffering that ultimate triumph is to be achieved.⁶⁵

With all this Vergil's writings begin to take on a spiritual quality that at times approaches Christian perspective, especially as seen in his famous *Fourth Eclogue*. Hadas observes,

This poem has been more widely discussed than any piece of similar length in classical literature. In language reminiscent of Scripture the poet prophesies the birth of a boy whose rule will usher in a golden age of peace. Since Constantine and Augustine, Christian writers have regarded the *Eclogue* as a prophecy of the Messiah. More probably the reference is to the child expected by Octavian and Scribonia, who proved to be a girl, the infamous Julia, or possibly to a child of Antony and Octavia, or to Pollio's own son. But if the prophecy cannot refer to Jesus, the notion of an expected redeemer may quite likely derive from the hopeful speculations of the Jews on the subject.⁶⁶

When one turns to the ancient Near Eastern world, he also encounters epic material. Kramer counts no less than nine epics in ancient Sumer. However, as Kramer points out, distinct differences exist between the Sumerian epic and its classical counterparts.

⁶⁴C. M. Bowra, *From Vergil to Milton* (New York: St. Martin's, 1967) 84.

⁶⁵M. Hadas, *A History of Latin Literature*, 154.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 144. Cyrus Gordon, "Vergil and the Near East," *Ugaritica VI* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1969) 277, suggests that "by Vergil's time the Jews of Italy must have cultivated messianism in the heart of the Roman Empire, where they influenced Romans of Vergil's generation." There was also a growing sense of apocalyptic in Vergil, a theme for which he was perhaps indebted to the widespread appearance of apocalypses in the centuries surrounding the advent of the Christian era. Messianism and apocalyptic were blended together by Vergil who had a great feeling for the destiny of Rome in general and for the key role of Augustus in particular.

The Sumerian epic poems consist of individual disconnected tales of varying length, each of which is restricted to a single episode. There is no attempt to articulate and integrate these episodes into a larger unit. There is relatively little characterization and psychological penetration in the Sumerian material. The heroes tend to be broad types, more or less undifferentiated, rather than highly personalized individuals. Moreover, the incidents and plot motifs are related in a rather static and conventionalized style; there is little of that plastic, expressive movement that characterizes such poems as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Mortal women play hardly any role in Sumerian epic literature, whereas they have a very prominent part in Indo-European epic literature. Finally, in the matter of technique, the Sumerian poet gets his rhythmic effects primarily from variations in the repetition patterns. He makes no use whatever of the meters or uniform line so characteristic of Indo-European epics.⁶⁷

Kramer adds that the Sumerian narratives doubtless influenced the literatures of the peoples around them so that the Sumerian epic probably formed the precursor to the later classical and western epics.⁶⁸ Be that as it may, a direct transmission to the Semitic world can be shown, most notably in the case of the famous Gilgamesh Epic of ancient Babylon which was drawn largely from several earlier Sumerian stories. Important for the present discussion is the fact that the Gilgamesh Epic is replete with many themes and elements common to epic literature in general. It focuses on a central hero whose deeds and fortunes are praised. It tells of his wisdom and strength, rehearsing his dangerous journeys during which his courageous strength in the face of great odds is demonstrated, often in the presence of hostile heavenly intervention. It, too, has a universalistic and timeless tone, for it grapples with the perennial problems of life itself: life's frailty, the relation of life to death and the afterlife, and how best to make the most of this life despite its sufferings. As Heidel writes, "Finally, the epic takes up the question as to what course a man should follow

⁶⁷S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago: Chicago University, 1963) 184-85.

⁶⁸The vastness of Sumerian connections in the ancient world has been demonstrated repeatedly. See, for example, the discussion of H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon* (New York: Hawthorn, 1962) 271-92; and E. Yamauchi, *Greece and Babylon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967) 26-32. In another connection, H. W. F. Saggs, *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel* (London: Athlone, 1978) 6, remarks, "Historically, it is difficult to accept a total absence of continuum in conceptual links between ancient Mesopotamia and the present." The established fact of cultural interrelations between Sumer and the Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds predisposes at least a case for a literary interplay as well. A literary link between the classical and Near Eastern civilizations has been pled by C. H. Gordon, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete* (New York: Norton, 1966); *idem*, *Before the Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); and *idem*, *The World of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958), 101-12.

in view of these hard facts. The solution it offers is simple: 'Enjoy your life and make the best of it!'"⁶⁹

The epic was also alive in ancient Syro-Palestine, as attested by the Ugaritic literature. Prominence of place must be given to the KRT Epic and the Epic of Aqhat. The former deals with heroism in the royal house and has a theme in some ways akin to the Helen of Troy motif of the Iliad. The latter tells of the fortunes of Aqhat and his son Danel at the hands of the goddess Anat. Although both epics lack the scope and psychological penetration of the classical epics and do not specifically formulate questions about the eternal issues of life, nonetheless they do wrestle with the problems of coping with the vicissitudes of this life, particularly in the face of the divine presence.⁷⁰ As well, they share motifs common both to the classical and Near Eastern literatures so that Gordon can say, "It should thus be apparent that Ugarit has the most intimate connections with the Old Testament in language and literature. At the same time, Ugarit has close Aegean connections."⁷¹

The point of all of this is not necessarily to demonstrate any distinct interaction of a particular epic between the Near East and the classical, western traditions, but simply to show that the epic was a widespread literary experience in the ancient world.⁷² Accordingly, it would seem only natural that the Hebrews would be partakers of that genre. Biblical critics have suggested that such is certainly the case. Gordon finds much traditional epic material in the OT and is especially attracted to the concept of royal epic as it appears in the patriarchal narratives.⁷³ Ryken, however, classifies the patriarchal

⁶⁹A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (2nd ed.; Chicago: Chicago University, 1949) 12. The Gilgamesh Epic is also known from Hittite and Hurrian tablets.

⁷⁰Most scholars suggest that the struggles of Baal against Yam and Mot also comprise an epic cycle. Particularly important parallels exist between Hab 3:3-15 and the Ugaritic material. See Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, 2.169-74, 178-80 (texts 51, 67, 68).

⁷¹Gordon, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete*, 28.

⁷²Although consideration of the epic in ancient India is beyond the parameters of this paper, it should be noted that the epic made a significant contribution to the literary tradition of the classical period. Two primary epics, both of which experienced varying recensions and interpolations, are attested: the Mahābhārata which traced the account of the bloody battle between the Kauravas and its bloody aftermath, including the adventures of the five sons of Pāṇdu; and the Rāmāyana, which celebrated the heroic deeds and adventures of Rāma, the virtuous prince of Ayodhyā. For details, see Vincent Smith, *The Oxford History of India* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1958) 55-60; and A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India* (2nd ed.; New York: Hawthorn, 1963) 409-34, 471-78.

⁷³See Gordon, *Before the Bible*, 285. Gordon earlier (pp. 101-12) suggests that Hebrew literature followed a pure format in its epic style due to its connection with Egypt. N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York: Atheneum, 1968) 315-20, remarks that, in a sense, the whole Bible is epic, especially the Christian message.

accounts as belonging to the wider genre of heroic narrative, with which he also includes the stories of Daniel, Gideon, David, Ruth, and Esther. He restricts biblical epic to the exodus event.

There is only one biblical story that is in the running for consideration as an epic. It is what I shall call the Epic of the Exodus, which occupies parts of the biblical books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The main narrative sections are as follows: Exodus 1–20, 32–34; Numbers 10–14, 16–17, 20–24; Deuteronomy 32–34.⁷⁴

Cassuto likewise decides for the presence of epic tradition in the OT, relating it particularly to the older poetry.

The Hebrew literature . . . continues the literary tradition that had already become crystallized among the Canaanite population before the people of Israel came into being, just as there survives in the Hebrew tongue, with certain dialectal variations, the most ancient Canaanite idiom.⁷⁵

Cassuto is careful to point out, however, that a fully developed epic poem does not exist in the OT canon. What is found, rather, are poetic remnants of what must have been a once extensive epic literature:

When we have regard to the fact that the relevant passages depict the events in poetic colours and expressions, and that in the main these phrases are stereotyped, recurring verbatim in quite a number of different verses, . . . it follows that these legends were not handed down orally in a simple prosaic speech, which was liable to variations, but assumed a fixed, traditional, poetic aspect. . . . This poetic form was specifically *epic* in character.⁷⁶

On the whole, one must agree with Cassuto. For certainly the basic epic standard that such a work must be a long narrative poem is nowhere met in the OT. Nevertheless, the primary importance of the exodus itself and the prevalence of the exodus motif, as well as the poetic reproduction of that event in various places in the OT, make it highly likely that Israel, like its neighbors, sang the praises of a past great era in epic fashion.⁷⁷ The epic remnants scattered throughout

⁷⁴Ryken, *The Literature of the Bible*, 81.

⁷⁵Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 2.70.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 73.

⁷⁷Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh*, 70, observes, "The exodus event is the heart of the Old Testament 'gospel,' and the word 'redeem' comes to be forever bound to it." To this may be added the remarks of O. T. Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) 267, "The deliverance from Egyptian bondage is the most important, as it is the most spectacular redemptive event in the

the OT render it possible also that the details of the exodus once existed in full epic form. If that was not in classical format, it was, at least, in the traditional style of the familiar Near Eastern heroic cycle.

Literary Dependence

At this point two further problems surface. (1) If it can be shown that Habakkuk's material is of epic quality, belonging to a corpus of epic poetry, can the full range of that epic material be determined or the original poem itself be recovered? (2) If that poem can be recovered and if it may be safely assumed that Israel was a full participant in the ancient Near Eastern Mediterranean milieu, was its epic drawn from and/or dependent upon any Near Eastern precursors?

The question of the content of the proposed Hebrew epic rests on an examination of those poems that sing of the era and events of Israel's exodus from Egypt and contain the same grammatical and literary features. To Hab 3:3-15 may be added: Exod 15:1-18; Deut 33:1-3; Judg 5:4-5; Pss 18:8-16 (Heb.); 68:8-9 (Heb.); 77:17-20 (Heb.); and 144:5-6. Two of these passages, Hab 3:3-15 and Exod 15:1-18, contain extended portrayals of the exodus experience.

Like Habakkuk's psalm, Exod 15:1-18 gives a detailed discussion of the era of the exodus, first singing of the exodus itself and Yahweh's victory at the Red Sea (vv 1-10) and then praising the Lord for his divine leading, first to Mount Sinai (vv 11-13) and then proleptically from Sinai to the Promised Land (vv 14-18).

Habakkuk adds considerable information to this event. In these verses one can observe that there are actually two compositions, each of which makes its own contribution to the corpus of the exodus epic. That there are two poems here can be seen both from their differing themes and the syntax of the respective material. Hab 3:3-7 describes God's leading of his heavenly and earthly hosts from the south in an awe-inspiring mighty theophany. It is marked structurally by the repeated use of the coordinator *waw* to tie together its thought associations. Hab 3:8-15 comprises a victory song commemorating the conquest itself and points to the basis of that success in the exodus event, particularly in the victory at the Red Sea. Structurally, no *waw* coordinator is used, thought associations being accomplished via variations in sentence structure, including change of word order and the skillful employment of poetic tricola.

Both portions, however, tell of the same era and sing of the unfolding drama of the exodus event and in so doing employ epic

history of Israel. Together with the events leading up to it, it is described in detail in Exodus 3-15 and referred to a hundred or more times in the rest of the Old Testament."

themes and style. Thus, there is the central focus on a hero—God himself. Moreover, in the first poem (vv 3–7) the poet relates the account of an epic journey, here God's leading of his people from the southland toward Canaan, the land of promise. He calls particular attention to God's command of nature in awesome theophany (vv 3–4), his special companions (v 5), his earthshaking power (v 6), and the effect of all of this on the inhabitants of the land (v 7).

The second poem (vv 8–15) transcends the general bounds of the movement from Egypt to the Jordan (cf. Ps 114:3–5), the phraseology being best understood as including God's miraculous acts in the conquest period as well. God's victories at the end of the exodus account are rehearsed first (vv 8–11), possibly reflecting such deeds as the triumph at the Red Sea (Exodus 15) and at the Jordan (Joshua 3–4), as well as the victories at the Wadi Kishon (Judges 4–5) and Gibeon (Joshua 10). The poet then directs his hearers' attention to the basic victory that gave Israel its deliverance and eventual conquest of Canaan—the triumph in Israel's exodus from Egypt (vv 12–15). That the singing of these two epic songs was designed for the listeners' response in submission to Israel's Redeemer can be seen in Habakkuk's own reaction to them (vv 16–19).

Likewise, epic elements can be seen in these two poems in the stylistic employment of literary features common to epic genre: the use of static epithets, set parallel terms, and the utilization of a vocabulary and themes common to the commemoration of the exodus event.⁷⁸ In both subject matter and literary style, Habakkuk's twofold psalm deserves to be recognized as epic remnant.

When one considers both of the major passages concerning the exodus (Exod 15:1–18; Hab 3:3–15) together with the reflections of that event in other fragmentary portions, it is clear that the primary emphasis of the epic cycle is on the deliverance out of Egypt and that all other happenings that follow, including the conquest, are intricately tied to it. Thus the whole movement from Egypt to Canaan forms one grand exodus event. Seen in this way it may be possible to sketch at least in shadowy form something of the substance of that once great epic concerning Israel's exodus out of Egypt and eventual entrance in triumph into Canaan through the might of its divine hero and victor, God himself.

The following outline of themes and their source passages may thus be tentatively proposed.

- I. The Exodus Experience: The Redeemer's redemption of his people (Exod 15:1–10)

⁷⁸See further, Rummel, "Narrative Structures in the Ugaritic Texts," 3.236–38.

- A. Heading and Theme: A song of redemption for the Redeemer (Exod 15:1-2)
- B. God's Redemptive Work: Brings deliverance to his people from their oppressors (Exod 15:3-5)
- C. Israel's redemption: By the power of her omnipotent Redeemer (Exod 15:6-10; cf. Hab 3:14b-15)
- II. The Movement to Sinai: The Redeemer's self-revelation to his redeemed people (Exod 15:11-13)
- III. The Movement from Sinai to the Jordan: The revelation of Israel's Redeemer to the nations (Hab 3:3-15)
 - A. The Redeemer's coming from the south (Hab 3:3-15)
 - 1. His appearance (Hab 3:3-4; cf. Judg 5:4; Ps 68:8)
 - 2. His associates (Hab 3:5; cf. Deut 33:2-3)
 - 3. His actions (Hab 3:6-7)
 - B. The Redeemer's conquest (Hab 3:8-15)
 - 1. His power: As seen at the Jordan (Hab 3:8-9)
 - 2. His power: As seen in the natural world (Hab 3:10-11; cf. Judg 5:4-5; Pss 18:8-16; 68:8-9; 77:17-20; 144:5-6)
 - 3. His power: As seen by the enemy (Hab 3:12-15; cf. Exod 15:14-18)

So viewed, the exodus epic once sang of God's mighty prowess in delivering his people from Egypt, traced God's guidance of them to Sinai and through the Transjordanian Wilderness, sang of the crossing of the Jordan River and recorded the triumphal entry into and the conquest of the land. The full epic, obviously, has not been inscripturated. Perhaps this is because, as Cassuto suggests, the language of the full blown ancient epic was so intertwined with its mythological predecessors,⁷⁹ or simply because God wanted the focus of Israel's attention to be on himself and the redemption that he alone could and did supply to his enslaved people rather than on an account that all too easily could become treated as merely legendary.

The question of Israel's literary indebtedness to other literary traditions must now be considered. Certainly Israel's central location in the midst of a somewhat similar cultural milieu favors the possibility of a literary borrowing. Moreover,

Literary works throughout the ancient world, especially in the ancient Near East, share motifs and forms. Proverbs, hymns, disputations, and prophecies appear in the literature of cultures influenced by the Hebrews.⁸⁰

Indeed, the Hebrew poets' employment of literary themes and terminology found in the epics of the surrounding nations makes the

⁷⁹Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 2.70-80, 102.

⁸⁰V. L. Tollers and J. R. Maier, eds., *The Bible and Its Literary Milieu* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 11.

question of the relationship of the Hebrew epic to the epic literature of the Ancient Near East a pertinent one. However, as Lambert points out, with regard to the many parallels between the literature of Mesopotamia and the Bible, one must be cautious in finding direct links in such cases.⁸¹

Although some scholars suggest a relationship between the above mentioned material with Mesopotamian sources (e.g., Kramer and Smith), most underscore the frequent similarities between the OT and the great Canaanite epics in vocabulary, poetic devices, and, especially, thematic motifs. As for the material considered here, Cassuto finds Canaanite literary traditions echoed in nearly every verse of Exod 15:1-18,⁸² and also lists the several cases where Habakkuk has reproduced epic elements in his two psalms: the noise of the waves of the sea (Hab 3:10), the anger of the Lord against the enemy (Hab 3:8, 12; cf. Exod 15:7), the appearance of the Lord riding on his chariots, the clouds of the sky (Hab 3:8; cf. Exod 15:2, 4), the thunderous voice of the Lord above the roar of the sea (Hab 3:10), the fear and flight of the enemy at the presence of the Lord (Hab 3:10; cf. Exod 15:14), the Lord's fighting against the rebels with his divine weapons (Hab 3:9, 11, 14), the Lord's compelling of the monsters to leap into the sea (Hab 3:6; cf. Exod 15:3), the Lord's annihilation of Rahab and his helpers (Hab 3:9, 13; cf. Exod 15:2), the Lord's treading upon the sea (Hab 3:15), and his final reign (Exod 15:18).⁸³ Cassuto relates most of these to the battles reported in the Ugaritic tales of the Baal and Anat cycles wherein Baal compelled Prince Yam (sea) and Judge Nahar (river) to recognize his kingship over them.⁸⁴ Thus, the Hebrew poets used "the expression and motifs that . . . were a paramount feature of the ancient epic."⁸⁵ He goes on to suggest that the early Hebrew storytellers probably borrowed wholesale elements from these Canaanite myths and may even have had native (non-biblical) epic literature to draw upon, such as in the case of "The Revolt of the Sea."

⁸¹W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," in *The Bible and Its Literary Milieu*, 285-97.

⁸²Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 2.99-101.

⁸³See the concise summary by Rummel, "Narrative Structures in the Ugaritic Texts," 3.236-39.

⁸⁴Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 2.80-97. Cassuto relates the Lord's treading upon the sea to Marduk's defeat of Tiamat recounted in the *Enuma Elish*; see *ANET*, 67.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 99. For a discussion of common elements of the epic battle of the divine hero against the sea, see E. L. Greenstein, "The Snaring of Sea in the Baal Epic," *MAARAV* 3 (1982) 195-216. Greenstein has an excellent bibliography of sources that relate the epic material to the Bible.

Although the Israelites no longer recounted tales concerning two deities who waged war against each other, they did nevertheless preserve a story about one of the created beings—the great Sea—who rebelled against his Creator, or of some kind of evil angel, who attempted unsuccessfully to oppose the will of God of the universe.⁸⁶

However, it seems that the case for the adoption of a complete secular story in full literary dependence upon Ugaritic source material has not been demonstrated. While many of the data cited above extensively reflect the phraseology and vocabulary of Canaanite literature, no full scale borrowing can be shown, even in Cassuto's "Song of the Sea."

Not only this, but the settings of these two sources are distinctly different. The relevant Near Eastern accounts deal with creation and the ordering of the heavens and earth.⁸⁷ The cycle of biblical narratives upon which Habakkuk evidently drew deals with the exodus, the basic expression of Israel's spiritual heritage. Although the two extended portions in the OT considered here, Exod 15:1–18; Hab 3:3–15, are indeed victory songs, the literary relationship between the scriptural accounts and the Near Eastern literature need be viewed as nothing more than that. All that can be safely said is that in the singing of God's redemption of Israel from Egypt, Israel's songwriters have used the format, vocabulary, and phraseology of victory genre and heroic epic narratives. Therefore, Cross is correct when he maintains,

Israel's religion in its beginning stood in a clear line of continuity with the mythopoeic patterns of West Semitic, especially Canaanite myth. Yet its religion did emerge from the old matrix and its institutions were transformed by the impact of formative historical events and their interpretation by elements of what we may call "Proto-Israel" which came together in the days of Moses and in the era of the Conquest.⁸⁸

Accordingly, it is apparent that just as with the whole corpus, so the relevant verses of Habakkuk's prophecy partake of a cycle of traditional epic material which, though using the language and literary motifs of its neighbors (particularly of Canaan), spoke of life through a victor, God himself.

⁸⁶Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 2.81.

⁸⁷A discussion and detailed critique of the growing literature concerning the Hebrews' supposed indebtedness to the literature of the ancient Near East in general and to Ugaritic, in particular, is given by Rummel, "Narrative Structures in the Ugaritic Texts," 3.233–332.

⁸⁸Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 143–44. Cf. P. C. Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," *TB* 22 (1971) 25.

Herein lies the crucial point of the matter. Unlike the typical secular epic, the central figure of the scriptural epic is not man written large, but the one in whose image man is created—God himself. Despite the prowess and success of the hero of the standard non-biblical epic, a note of pathos and a lack of fulfillment conventionally attend his actions. Accompanying the highest attainments of heroic man, be it the valor and wisdom of Homer's heroes, the virtue of Vergil's Aeneas, or the strength and resourcefulness of Gilgamesh, there is always the sense of striving to "make do" in the face of life's stark realities and often cruel circumstances. Man, then, must become superman, or as Ing puts it, "the human figures themselves may at moments be raised to act on the superhuman plane."⁸⁹ However representative of the finest qualities of humanity the epic hero may be, a sense of the unattainable, of the failure to achieve immortality and full human potential can be felt. Perhaps no more telling words can be cited than those of Gilgamesh:

[For] whom, Urshanabi, have my hands become weary?
 For whom is the blood of my heart being spent?
 For myself I have not obtained any boon.
 For the 'earth-lion' have I obtained the boon.⁹⁰

In the corpus of biblical epic literature, however, Israel's attention is focused always upon the one who himself is the *summum bonum*, the source of man's redemption and the norm and standard for man's activities. In the deepest sense, man's fullest goals become fulfilled by being identified with and submitted to him who is ultimate reality. Israelite epic, then, unlike its secular counterparts, is realized epic,⁹¹ for the one of whose presence the Israelite sings is at once man's highest goal.

That the Hebrew epic is realized epic may be seen not only from the clear implications of the epic material itself (e.g., Exod 15:2, 17–18; Ps 77:21 [Heb.]), but from the reaction of Habakkuk at witnessing the mighty acts of God (Hab 3:16–19; cf. Job's similar response at seeing the all-sufficient greatness of God, Job 42:1–6). Moreover, it is clear that the exodus event becomes throughout the OT not only the basis of Israel's redemption but the entrance into a life lived in accordance with God's predetermination of what is best for man.⁹²

⁸⁹Ing, "Epic," 1.197.

⁹⁰The translation given here is taken from Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, 92.

⁹¹I owe the coining of this term to Michael Travers of the English Department at Liberty University.

⁹²See the helpful discussion of G. Vox, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 124–29. See also E. Martens, *God's Design* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 81–91, 208.

This is apparent not only from the account of the exodus from Egypt, which itself forms the foundation for the formulaic presentation of the Ten Commandments (Exod 19:4–6; 20:2–17; Deut 5:6–21) and the specific requirements for a redeemed people (Deut 4:37–40; 5:27–29; 10:12–21; 12:28; Jer 7:22–23, etc.), but from the details of the wilderness wanderings (Deut 8:1–6; 11:1–7, etc.) and the culminating experience of being God's special people (Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6–11; 14:2; 26:16–19) fitted for living in the land of promise (Deut 6:1–25; 8:7–10; 11:8–21; Josh 23:3–6, 15; Ps 105:43–45, etc.).⁹³

From start to finish, then, the exodus formed one grand event through which a redeemed people was to realize life's full potential and finest blessings. Indeed, before that event had taken place or the epic songs had been sung, God had told Moses,

"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey."⁹⁴

Through it all a redeemed people learned the divine prescription for living life on the highest plane. As Martens remarks,

In summary, early Israel knew about God through his activity in nature and among nations. She experienced him more directly in his power and salvation at the exodus, and in an on-going fashion she was led into a life of intimacy with him in the religious practices which he enjoined for her.⁹⁵

The basis of that on-going life lay in doing that which was perfect in God's sight (Deut 18:13; cf. Ps 101:6). The dynamic for carrying out that life rested in the appropriating of God's moral attributes as one's own, especially his holiness (Lev 11:44; 19:2). The standard for the believer's ethical conduct meant living life as God did, in truth and justice (Ps 85:1–14 [Heb.]), and the imperative for that ethic lay in a growing, all-consuming love for God that resulted in a consistent

⁹³K. A. Kitchen, "Exodus," in *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 404, well remarks, "Repeatedly in later generations, the prophets in exhorting Israel to return to her God and the psalmists in their meditations hark back to this Exodus. . . . For them, the great redemption is ever to be remembered with gratitude and response in obedience."

⁹⁴Exod 3:6–8, *NIV*.

⁹⁵E. Martens, *God's Design*, 96. See also his earlier discussion on pp. 18–20.

faithfulness to God in every area of life.⁹⁶ Unlike the frustrated hero of the secular epic who ultimately remained unfulfilled, the OT believer found his epic hero in the One who offered life on the highest plane. That message of full salvation would continue to punctuate the pages of the old revelation until in the fulness of time would come the Great Redeemer who would proclaim "I am come that ye might have life and that more abundantly" (John 10:10).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A careful analysis of Habakkuk's twofold psalm reveals that it is to be viewed primarily as a victory song. Like other victory songs in the ancient Near East its leading themes and literary features place Habakkuk's psalm firmly within the corpus of Semitic epic literature. The common subject matter, phraseology, and structure it shares with several other early poetic compositions in the OT suggest the possibility of the existence of an ancient Hebrew epic cycle that commemorated God's heroic redemption of Israel in the movement from Egypt to Canaan. Moreover, it is not inconceivable that the meaning of that great exodus event, starting from the deliverance out of Egypt and stretching to the conquest, continued to be sung in non-canonical and canonical settings down through Israel's history, becoming particularly prominent at times of national distress, as in Habakkuk's day. As noted above, the language and literary themes of that great event were sung not only by Moses (Exod 15:1-18; cf. Num 23:22-24; 24:8-9; Deut 33:2-3), but on subsequent occasions at crucial times: by Deborah (Judg 5:4-5) and David (Pss 18:8-16 [Heb.]; 68:8-9 [Heb.]; 144:5-6), and in the poems of the temple liturgy (Pss 77:17-20 [Heb.]; 114:3-7). Thus, Cross affirms that

The oldest poetry of Israel, our earliest Biblical sources which survive in unrevised form, is marked by a ubiquitous motif: the march of Yahweh from the southern mountains (or from Egypt) with his heavenly armies.⁹⁷

Cross goes on to suggest that this became the dominant theme of the early Israelite cultus. Whether or not this latter idea can be affirmed, certainly the exodus event is repeatedly referred to, and themes from the epic cycle continue to appear in the canonical literature at crucial times in the first millennium B.C. One may consider, for example, Joel

⁹⁶The NT ethic, based on the new covenant where God's eternal principles are written in the believer's heart, prescribes the same great elements: perfection (Matt 5:48), holiness (1 Pet 1:16), and truth and love (Eph 4:15-16).

⁹⁷Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," 25.

(3:15–16), Amos (1:2; 4:13*b*; 8:8; 9:5–6), and Isaiah (e.g., 17:13; 44:27; 50:2; 51:10, 15; 64:1–4; 66:15) in the eighth century, and Nahum (1:2–4), as well as Habakkuk, in the seventh century.

Thus, there is every reason to believe that Habakkuk could have literary antecedents that were fully available to him for use in composing his double psalm. In this regard, Keil remarks:

The description of this theophany rests throughout upon earlier lyrical descriptions of the revelations of God in the earlier times of Israel. Even the introduction (ver. 3) has its roots in the song of Moses in Deut. xxxiii.2; and in the further course of the ode we meet with various echoes of different psalms (compare ver. 6 with Ps. xviii.8; ver. 8 with Ps. xviii.10; ver. 19 with Ps. xviii.33, 34; also ver. 5 with Ps. lxxviii.25; ver. 8 with Ps. lxxviii.5, 34). The points of contact in vers. 10–15 with Ps. lxxvii.17–21, are still more marked, and are of such a kind that Habakkuk evidently had the psalm in his mind, and not the writer of the psalm the hymn of the prophet, and the prophet has reproduced in an original manner such features of the psalm as were adapted to his purpose.⁹⁸

Of course, God could also have supernaturally revealed to Habakkuk these very events so that Habakkuk saw and heard what transpired in those days. If so, he could have easily used the very archaic phraseology of that earlier age.⁹⁹ Habakkuk's own reaction to the epic material may well point to such a visionary experience: "I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound" (Hab 3:16). Under either alternative the archaic nature of the poetry is readily explained.

In any case, it is evident that Habakkuk had been led by the Lord to consider the greatness and sufficiency of God. In so doing, his attention is called to Israel's central experience of deliverance, the exodus. Habakkuk apparently knew it well: "LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD" (Hab 3:2*a*). As suggested above, he may even have had a body of epic literary tradition available to him as he contemplated his perplexities and God's person.¹⁰⁰ The rehearsal of the double poem of the exodus event was sufficient for the prophet.

⁹⁸Keil, *Minor Prophets*, 2.96.

⁹⁹So T. Laetsch, *Minor Prophets*, 345. So also, Smith, *Micah-Malachi* 116, who remarks, "3:3–15 is a vision of Habakkuk much like the vision God promised him in 2.3. Habakkuk may have had an ecstatic experience in which he 'saw' God coming to defeat his enemies."

¹⁰⁰Note that Habakkuk's final affirmation of confidence in the Lord (v 19) is also drawn from the corpus of older literature (cf. Ps 18:33–34 [Heb.] with Job 9:8). For Heb. בָּמוֹת = *bmt* / 'back,' see Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, 3.373.

Habakkuk had asked that—beyond whatever judgment Israel must experience—God would again move on behalf of his people in a deliverance like unto that in the exodus (Hab 3:2). The reiteration of God's past intervention on behalf of his people, delivering them from bondage and guiding them into the land of promise, brought reassurance to him (Hab 3:16–19). God's word had brought new confidence to the prophet that both the present situation and final destination for the people of God would find their resolution in the redeeming God of the exodus event. As Feinberg points out,

In a sublime manner the prophet now pictures a future redemption under figures taken from past events. The background here is the memory of the events of the Exodus and Sinai. Just as the Lord manifested Himself when He redeemed Israel from Egypt, He will appear again to deliver the godly among His people from their oppressors among the nations and will judge their foes as He did the land of Egypt.¹⁰¹

As the message of Habakkuk is heard again by the people of God, may that same God-inspired confidence and conviction grip them as the prophets of old,

I will wait patiently for the day of calamity . . .
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.
The Sovereign LORD is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
he enables me to go on the heights.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹C. L. Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody, 1976) 216–17. See also, H. Hailey, *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) 290.

¹⁰²Hab 3:16, 18–19, *NIV*.

NAG HAMMADI, Gnosticism AND NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

WILLIAM W. COMBS

The Gnostic heresy alluded to in the NT and widely repudiated by Christian writers in the second century and after has been increasingly studied in the last forty years. The discovery in upper Egypt of an extensive collection of Gnostic writings on papyri transformed a poorly known movement in early Christianity into a well documented heresy of diverse beliefs and practices.

The relationship of Gnosticism and the NT is an issue that has not been resolved by the new documents. Attempts to explain the theology of the NT as dependent on Gnostic teachings rest on questionable hypotheses. The Gnostic redeemer-myth cannot be documented before the second century. Thus, though the Gnostic writings provide helpful insight into the heresies growing out of Christianity, it cannot be assumed that the NT grew out of Gnostic teachings.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

STUDENTS of the NT have generally been interested in the subject of Gnosticism because of its consistent appearance in discussions of the "Colossian heresy" and the interpretation of John's first epistle. It is felt that Gnosticism supplies the background against which these and other issues should be understood. However, some who use the terms "Gnostic" and "Gnosticism" lack a clear understanding of the movement itself. In fact, our knowledge of Gnosticism has suffered considerably from a lack of primary sources. Now, however, with the discovery of the Nag Hammadi (hereafter, NH) codices, this void is being filled.

The NH codices were discovered in 1945, a year before the Qumran manuscripts, but the documents from NH have received comparatively little attention from conservative scholars. Unfortunately, political problems and personal rivalries have caused numerous

delays in the publication of the NH texts. Thanks mainly to the efforts of Professor James Robinson, English translations of all thirteen codices have at last been published in a single volume.¹ Photographic reproductions of the papyrus pages and leather covers are now also available.² A complete eleven-volume critical edition of the codices entitled *The Coptic Gnostic Library* began to appear in 1975. The amount of literature on NH is already quite large and growing at a rapid pace.³

The manuscripts from NH have importance for a number of scholarly disciplines, including Coptic itself, since the entire library is in that language. Also, because the vast majority of the library is composed of Christian Gnostic writings, it is now possible to study this movement from primary sources, rather than having to rely upon the secondhand accounts given by the early Church Fathers or "Heresiologists." Most important for Biblical studies, of course, is the relationship between NH and the NT.

CONTENTS OF THE LIBRARY

According to the best evidence, the discovery of the NH codices took place in December 1945.⁴ Three brothers, Abu al-Majd, Muhammad, and Khalifah Ali of the al-Samman clan, were digging at the base of a cliff for soil rich in nitrates to use as fertilizer. The cliff, Jabal al Tarif, is about ten kilometers northeast of Nag Hammadi, the largest town in the area. Abu al-Majd actually unearthed the jar; but his older brother, Muhammad, quickly took control of it, broke it open, and discovered the codices. Having wrapped the books in his tunic, he returned to his home in the village of al-Qasr, the site of the ancient city Chenoboskion⁵ where Saint Pachomius was converted to Christianity in the fourth century and where one of his

¹James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977).

²James M. Robinson, ed., *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Leiden: Brill, 1972-84). For a complete list, see B. A. Pearson and J. E. Goehring, eds., *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) xiii.

³David M. Scholer's bibliography runs to nearly 2,500 items (*Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1948-1969* [Leiden: Brill, 1971]). It is supplemented each year in *Novum Testamentum* (1971-). Over 3,000 additional items have been listed by Scholer since 1971.

⁴The most up-to-date and thorough account of the discovery is by James M. Robinson, "The Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices," *BA* 42 (1979) 206-24. This should be supplemented by his "The Discovering and Marketing of Coptic Manuscripts: The Nag Hammadi Codices and the Bodmer Papyri," in *Egyptian Christianity*, 2-25.

⁵Robinson believes the name should be spelled Chenoboskia.

monasteries was located. Muhammad Ali dumped the codices on top of some straw that was lying by the oven to be burned. His mother thought they were worthless and burned some of the pages in the oven (probably Codex XII of which only a few fragmentary leaves remain⁶).

The books were eventually sold for a few piasters or given away until their value was later realized. Most of them went through the hands of a series of middlemen and were sold on the black market through antiquities dealers. Having arrived by various means in Cairo, the majority of the library was either purchased by the Coptic Museum or confiscated by the Egyptian Department of Antiquities when attempts were made to smuggle some codices out of the country. Most of Codex I was taken out of Egypt by a Belgian antiquities dealer. It was unsuccessfully offered for sale in New York and Ann Arbor in 1949. Finally, in May 1952 it was purchased by the Jung Institute of Zurich and named the Jung Codex. The rest of Codex I had found its way to the Coptic Museum. In exchange for the rights to publish the entire codex (six volumes from 1956 to 1975), the Zurich authorities agreed to return the Jung Codex folios to the Coptic Museum.⁷ Today the entire NH library is in the Museum.

The first scholar to examine the codices was a young Frenchman, Jean Doresse, who had come to Egypt in 1947 to study Coptic monasteries.⁸ Because his wife had been a student in Paris with Togo Mina, the Director of the Coptic Museum, Doresse was allowed to see the codices and in January of 1948 announced their discovery to the world. The death of Mina and subsequent political upheavals in Egypt put a halt to plans to publish the library. Doresse attached the ancient place name of Chenoboskion to the discovery, but it never caught on. Later scholars have called the discovery NH, probably because this location has served as a base camp for all who have come to investigate the origin of the library.⁹

In 1956 the new Director of the Coptic Museum, Pahor Labib, made plans for a facsimile edition of the library, but only one volume appeared. An English translation of *The Gospel of Thomas* was published in 1959. Because Labib allowed relatively few scholars to have access to the library, only a few parts of it were published until 1972. In 1961 under the auspices of UNESCO, an agreement was

⁶Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 23.

⁷For details about the intrigues of the Jung Codex, see J. M. Robinson, "The Jung Codex: The Rise and Fall of a Monopoly," *RelSRev* 3 (1977) 17-30; *Egyptian Christianity*, 2-25.

⁸Doresse has written an account of his experiences in *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, trans. P. Mairé (New York: Viking, 1960) 116-36.

⁹James M. Robinson, "Introduction," *BA* 42 (1979) 201.

worked out with the Egyptian government to publish a facsimile edition of the entire library. The project was delayed until 1970 when an International Committee for the NH Codices was formed under the leadership of James Robinson. By 1977 the entire library was in the public domain.

Description

A list of the tractates in the NH library can be found in Table 1. Listings of the library refer to thirteen codices; however, the eight leaves of Codex XIII form a separate essay or tractate that was tucked inside the cover of Codex VI in antiquity.¹⁰ Much of Codex XII is missing, probably lost or destroyed since the discovery of the library. The library contains a total of fifty-two tractates of which six are duplicates. Of the forty-six remaining tractates, six are texts of which a complete copy existed elsewhere, so there are forty tractates that are extant only in the NH library. Fragments of three of these were already extant, but these fragments were too small to identify their contents until NH provided the full text.¹¹ About ten of the tractates are in poor enough condition so as often to obscure the train of thought. In terms of pages of text, Robinson estimates that out of 1,239 inscribed pages that were buried, 1,156 have survived at least in part.¹²

Each codex was originally bound in leather; the covers of Codices I–XI have survived. These were lined with papyrus pasted into thick cardboards (called cartonnage) in order to produce a hardback effect. Study of this used papyrus, which consists mostly of letters and business documents, has produced names of persons and places as well as dates that help to date the collection of the library to the middle of the fourth century. Of course, this does not determine the date of the origin of the individual tractates except in respect to the *terminus ad quem*. Some are known to have been written as early as the second century.¹³

The language of the codices is Coptic, which simply means “Egyptian” (the consonants CPT in “Coptic” are a variant of those in

¹⁰James M. Robinson, “Inside the Cover of Codex VI,” in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhling*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 74–87.

¹¹James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Codices* (2nd ed.; Claremont, Calif.: Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 1977) 3–4. Greek papyri fragments discovered at Oxyrhynchus in 1897 and 1904, called the “Logia” by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, turn out to be the Greek text of the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*. See J. A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Missoula: Scholars, 1974) 355–433.

¹²Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Codices*, 4.

¹³Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 101–2.

TABLE I

Tractates in the NH Library

<i>Codex</i>	<i>Tractate</i>	<i>Title</i>
I	1	<i>The Prayer of the Apostle Paul</i> (+ colophon)
I	2	<i>The Apocryphon of James</i>
I	3	<i>The Gospel of Truth</i>
I	4	<i>The Treatise on Resurrection</i>
I	5	<i>The Tripartite Tractate</i>
II	1	<i>The Apocryphon of John</i>
II	2	<i>The Gospel of Thomas</i>
II	3	<i>The Gospel of Philip</i>
II	4	<i>The Hypostasis of the Archons</i>
II	5	<i>On the Origin of the World</i>
II	6	<i>The Exegesis of the Soul</i>
II	7	<i>The Book of Thomas the Contender</i> (+ colophon)
III	1	<i>The Apocryphon of John</i>
III	2	<i>The Gospel of the Egyptians</i>
III	3	<i>Eugnostos the Blessed</i>
III	4	<i>The Sophia of Jesus Christ</i>
III	5	<i>The Dialogue of the Savior</i>
IV	1	<i>The Apocryphon of John</i>
IV	2	<i>The Gospel of the Egyptians</i>
V	1	<i>Eugnostos the Blessed</i>
V	2	<i>The Apocalypse of Paul</i>
V	3	<i>The First Apocalypse of James</i>
V	4	<i>The Second Apocalypse of James</i>
V	5	<i>The Apocalypse of Adam</i>
VI	1	<i>The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles</i>
VI	2	<i>The Thunder, Perfect Mind</i>
VI	3	<i>Authoritative Teaching</i>
VI	4	<i>The Concept of Our Great Power</i>
VI	5	<i>Plato, Republic 588B–589B</i>
VI	6	<i>The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth</i>
VI	7	<i>The Prayer of Thanksgiving</i> (+ scribal note)
VI	8	<i>Asclepius 21–29</i>
VII	1	<i>The Paraphrase of Shem</i>
VII	2	<i>The Second Treatise of the Great Seth</i>
VII	3	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>
VII	4	<i>The Teaching of Silvanus</i> (+ colophon)
VII	5	<i>The Three Steles of Seth</i> (+ colophon)
VIII	1	<i>Zostrianos</i>
VIII	2	<i>The Letter of Peter to Philip</i>
IX	1	<i>Melchizedek</i>
IX	2	<i>The Thought of Norea</i>
IX	3	<i>The Testimony of Truth</i>
X	1	<i>Marsanes</i>
XI	1	<i>The Interpretation of Knowledge</i>
XI	2	<i>A Valentinian Exposition</i>
XI	2a	<i>On the Anointing</i>
XI	2b	<i>On Baptism A</i>
XI	2c	<i>On Baptism B</i>
XI	2d	<i>On the Eucharist A</i>

TABLE 1 (continued)

<i>Codex</i>	<i>Tractate</i>	<i>Title</i>
XI	2c	<i>On the Eucharist B</i>
XI	3	<i>Allogenes</i>
XI	4	<i>Hypsiphron</i>
XII	1	<i>The Sentences of Sextus</i>
XII	2	<i>The Gospel of Truth</i>
XII	3	<i>Fragments</i>
XIII	1	<i>Trimorphic Protennoia</i>
XIII	2	<i>On the Origin of the World</i>

"Egyptian," GPT). However, two dialects are used, Sahidic for most of the library and Subachmimic for Codices I, X, and part of XI.¹⁴ Although written in Coptic, it is almost the universal opinion of scholars that the library is a translation of Greek originals. Almost nothing is known about those who translated the tractates into Coptic, those who produced the extant copies, or those who buried them. Robinson has attempted to connect the library with the Pachomian monastery that was located at Chenoboskion, but this link is now questioned.¹⁵

In listings of the codices the Berlin Codex 8502, which dates from the fifth century, is sometimes included. Its four tractates are similar to those found at NH; in fact, two are duplicates. Although discovered in 1896, it was not published until 1955.¹⁶

Subject Matter

The tractates represent a diverse background that includes non-Gnostic, non-Christian Gnostic(?), and Christian Gnostic works. The question of which, if any, of the tractates fall into the non-Christian Gnostic category is widely debated (see below).

¹⁴ *IDBSup*, s.v. "Nag Hammadi," by George W. MacRae, 613.

¹⁵ *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 13–21; *The Nag Hammadi Codices*, 1–2. Robinson's view that the NH library came from a Pachomian monastery was based on the preliminary study of the cartonnage by the late John W. B. Barnes, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. M. Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1975) 9–18. Further study has cast serious doubts about whether the monks mentioned in the cartonnage are Pachomian. See J. C. Shelton, "Introduction," in *Nag Hammadi Codices: Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage of the Covers*, ed. J. W. Barnes, G. M. Browne, and J. C. Shelton (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 11. Though the Pachomian origin of the NH library has also been supported by F. C. Wisse, C. Hedrick, and J. E. Goehring, authorities on Pachomius question it. See A. Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," in *Egyptian Christianity*, 278–83 and P. Rosseau, *Pachomius* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985) 27.

¹⁶ "Nag Hammadi," by George W. MacRae, 615.

Since it is not feasible to discuss the contents of each tractate, it may be helpful to present at least a preliminary classification of the library according to the various genres represented therein.

Literary Genres

The library contains a wide variety of literary genres. Some of these are typical of Gnostic literature, while others are imitative of the genres in Christian and other literature. Some of the tractates are representative of more than one genre. The following classifications are taken from MacRae.¹⁷

Gospels. Of the four tractates that bear the title "gospel," *The Gospel of Truth*, *The Gospel of Thomas*, *The Gospel of Philip*, and *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, none actually correspond to the gospel genre of the NT. The most important of these, *The Gospel of Thomas*, is a collection of 114 logia or sayings attributed to Jesus. The Greek original was probably composed in Edessa in Syria ca. A.D. 140.¹⁸

Apocalypses. A number of tractates are titled "apocalypses": *The Apocalypse of Paul*, *The First Apocalypse of James*, *The Second Apocalypse of James*, *The Apocalypse of Adam*, and *Apocalypse of Peter*. Also in this category would be *Asclepius* 21–29, *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, and *The Paraphrase of Shem*. In one of the most important of these, *The Apocalypse of Adam*, the future course of Gnostic history is received by Adam in a revelation and transmitted to his son Seth. This tractate is claimed to display a non-Christian Gnosticism.¹⁹

Acts. One tractate in the Nag Hammadi library uses the name "acts" in its title, *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*. Actually, another work, *The Letter of Peter to Philip* has closer parallels to the NT book of Acts.

Letters. Some of the tractates, such as *The Treatise on Resurrection* and *Eugnostos the Blessed*, have occasionally been referred to as epistles because they are addressed to pupils from their teacher. However, they fall more into the category of treatises. None of the tractates are imitative of the Pauline letter form.

Dialogues. MacRae notes that "one of the most characteristic genres of Gnostic literature is the dialogue between the risen Jesus

¹⁷"Nag Hammadi," by George W. MacRae, 616–17.

¹⁸ISBE, 1979 ed., s.v. "Apocryphal Gospels," by Edwin M. Yamauchi, 186.

¹⁹IDBSup, s.v. "Adam, Apocalypse of," by George W. MacRae, 9–10.

and his disciples in which Gnostic teaching is revealed."²⁰ *The Sophia of Jesus Christ* and *The Dialogue of the Savior* are excellent examples of this genre in the NH library. Parts of several other tractates also fall within this category.

Secret Books. The word "apocryphon" is used in the titles of two works, *The Apocryphon of James* and *The Apocryphon of John*. Strictly speaking, this category is not a separate genre since these two works fall into the apocalyptic and revelational discourse classifications.

Speculative treatises. The most important of these is *On the Origin of the World*. In addition, *Eugnostos the Blessed* and a few other tractates have affinities with this genre.

Wisdom Literature. The two examples of this genre in the NH library, *The Teachings of Silvanus* and *The Sentences of Sextus*, are both non-Gnostic writings. The latter tractate is a Coptic translation of a well-known ancient work which is extant in Greek, Latin, and several other languages.²¹

Revelational discourses. A number of works come under this heading in which a revealer speaks in the first person. Sometimes, as in the case of *The Thunder*, *Perfect Mind*, and *Trimorphic Protennoia*, the revealer is a female.

Prayers. There are examples of Christian and non-Christian prayers in the library. Three of these are *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, *The Prayer of Thanksgiving*, and *The Three Steles of Seth*.

Types of Gnosticism

The NH library has made available a wealth of primary Gnostic material; however, it has probably generated more questions than it has answered. Doresse's preliminary investigations led him to conclude that the library was primarily a Sethian Gnostic collection.²² A study by Wisse has now demonstrated that Doresse was premature in his assessment of the library and, in fact, virtually none of the tractates corroborates in detail the accounts of Sethian Gnosticism given by the Church Fathers.²³ Some scholars now question the reliability of patristic testimony regarding Gnosticism. Evans has

²⁰"Nag Hammadi," by George W. MacRae, 616. On the genre of dialogues, see PHEME PERKINS, *The Gnostic Dialogue* (New York: Paulist, 1980).

²¹Frederick Wisse, "Introduction to *The Sentences of Sextus*," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson, 454.

²²Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, 249-51.

²³Frederick Wisse, "The Sethians and the Nag Hammadi Library," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1972 Proceedings*, vol. 2, ed. Lane C. McGaughey (n.p.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 601-7.

observed that "liberal scholars treat the Fathers with reserve while conservative scholars tend to see the new source material providing some confirmation of the Fathers."²⁴

However, the inability to correlate every facet of Gnosticism found in the library with the patristic testimony should not be viewed as unusual. There was great variety in Gnostic systems. For example, Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 180) noted that the Valentinians "differ among themselves in their treatment of the same points, and in regard to the things they describe and the names they employ, are at variance with one another."²⁵ Also, it appears that the Heresiologists, rather than intentionally distorting Gnostic thought, seemed to have sometimes misunderstood it.

Although it is true that some of the NH materials cannot be identified with the well-known Gnostic systems of the second and third centuries, a number of the tractates do show clear correspondences.²⁶ MacRae would classify all of Codex I, *The Gospel of Philip*, and *The Apocalypse of James* as representative of the Valentinian sect.²⁷ *The Apocryphon of John* is in general agreement with the teachings of the Barbelo-Gnostics as reported by Irenaeus.²⁸ Other tractates have been identified with the Sethians and other Gnostic sects, but most of these suggestions are only tentative at this early stage in the study of the library.

Non-Gnostic Material

One of the greatest surprises in the library was the presence of non-Gnostic tractates such as Plato's *Republic* and *The Sentences of Sextus*, a series of ethical maxims attributed to the philosopher Sextus. Three tractates from Codex VI, *The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth*, *The Prayer of Thanksgiving*, and *Asclepius 21-29*, are clear-cut examples of Hermetic literature.²⁹ The Hermetica are traditions from Egypt that were purported to be the revelations of Hermes Trismegistos, the Egyptian god of wisdom.

Since most of the library is composed of Christian Gnostic works, the question arises as to why non-Christian and even non-Gnostic documents, such as a portion of Plato's *Republic*, would be included in the library.

²⁴C. A. Evans, "Current Issues in Coptic Gnosticism for New Testament Study," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 9 (1979) 97.

²⁵*Against Heresies*, I. 11. 1.

²⁶For information on the various Gnostic systems, see Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1958).

²⁷"Nag Hammadi," by George W. MacRae, 617.

²⁸Werner Foerster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, vol. 1: *Patristic Evidence*, ed. R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 100-120.

²⁹*IDBSup*, s.v. "Hermetic Literature," by Edwin M. Yamauchi, 408.

The answer is found in understanding the gnostic approach to interpretation. For them, truth lies at two levels. At the literal and obvious level truth is accessible to all, but at the deeper level one finds truth which only the Gnostic can discern. Such an approach is assumed by the *Gospel of Thomas* (II, 2): "Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death." Therefore, documents which represent a variety of traditions (Plato, Hermetica, Sextus, Silvanus) may be interpreted at a deeper (i.e., gnostic) level.³⁰

ISSUES IN NT INTERPRETATION

The NH library was discovered forty years ago, but because most of the tractates have only been published in recent years, the interpretation of the library is just beginning. Already, however, some major issues of interpretation in relation to the NT have arisen.

Pre-Christian Gnosticism

Probably most of the discussion about the contents of the library has centered around its contribution to the question of pre-Christian Gnosticism. Until the twentieth century, the prevailing view of Gnosticism was that of the Church Fathers, who held that it was a heresy that developed out of Christianity. Early in this century this view was challenged by the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* or History of Religions School.³¹ This approach

represents the most thorough-going application of a naturalistic historicism to the study of the Bible. It assumes that biblical religion, in both the Old and New Testaments, passed through stages of growth and evolution like all ancient religions, and in this evolution was heavily influenced through interaction with its religious environment. This method involves the consistent application of the principle of analogy to biblical religion: the history and development of biblical religion must be analogous to the history and development of other ancient religions.³²

The leading spokesmen of the History of Religions School, Wilhelm Bousset (1865–1920) and Richard Reitzenstein (1861–1931), argued upon the basis of Hermetic, Iranian, and Mandaean documents, all of which *postdated* the NT, that Gnosticism existed prior

³⁰ Evans, "Current Issues in Coptic Gnosticism," 97.

³¹ For an excellent discussion of the History of Religions School, see George E. Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 195–214.

³² Ladd, *New Testament and Criticism*, 196.

³³ Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Some Alleged Evidences for Pre-Christian Gnosticism," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974) 47.

to Christianity.³³ Rudolf Bultmann adopted the idea of pre-Christian Gnosticism and sought to explain NT Christianity as the result of a syncretistic process that included Gnostic ideas.³⁴ Most German NT scholars, because of the influence of Bultmann, have assumed a pre-Christian Gnosticism as a basis for their interpretation of the NT. For example, one of Bultmann's students, Walter Schmithals seems to be able to find Gnosticism in almost every Pauline letter.³⁵ A number of scholars who agree with Bultmann are attempting to use the NH library in order to verify his view of NT Christianity. MacRae has accounted in a recent article: "It is my contention here that such evidence as we have now in the Nag Hammadi library tends to vindicate the position of Bultmann."³⁶

Problem of Definition

A vital consideration with regard to the question of pre-Christian Gnosticism is the need for defining Gnosticism itself. Evans has noted that "if Gnosticism is defined broadly then its origins are found to be much earlier and its roots quite diverse. However, if it is defined narrowly, Gnosticism may be viewed as an early Christian heresy and thus subsequent to the origin of Christianity."³⁷ Wilson has suggested that one solution to the problem of definition would be to distinguish between Gnosticism and Gnosis: "By Gnosticism we mean the specifically Christian heresy of the second century A.D., by Gnosis, in a broader sense, the whole complex of ideas belonging to the Gnostic movement and related trends of thought."³⁸ Unfortunately, some scholars feel that such distinctions are too confining. MacRae refuses to abide by Wilson's guidelines, suggesting that "it is not the terminology that matters most."³⁹ Bultmann uses the term *die Gnosis*, but

³⁴Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Scribner's, 1951-55) 1.164.

³⁵See his *Gnosticism in Corinth*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971) and *Paul and the Gnostics*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972).

³⁶George W. MacRae, "Nag Hammadi and the New Testament," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, ed. Barbara Aland (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978) 146.

³⁷Evans, "Current Issues in Coptic Gnosticism for New Testament Study," 98. On the issue of defining Gnosticism broadly, see K. Rudolph, "'Gnosis' and 'Gnosticism'—the Problems of their Definition and their Relation to the Writings of the New Testament," in *The New Testament and Gnosis*, ed. A. J. M. Wedderburn and A. H. B. Logan (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983) 21-37; see also K. Rudolph, *Gnosis* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).

³⁸R. McL. Wilson, *Gnosis and the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968) 9. See also his presidential address to the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas in Rome in 1981, "Nag Hammadi and the New Testament," *NTS* 28 (1982) 292.

³⁹MacRae, "Nag Hammadi and the New Testament," 146.

his translators render it into English by the term "Gnosticism." German scholars prefer to use the term *die Gnosis* in the widest possible sense.

For the sake of clarity it is essential to follow the distinctions between Gnosis and Gnosticism suggested by Wilson. However, even if the term "Gnosticism" is restricted to the second and third century sects, it is still difficult to come up with a definition that will incorporate the variety of developed Gnostic systems. Yamauchi believes that the essential "element of any developed Gnosticism would be a radical dualism between the divine and the created, inasmuch as a fundamental Gnostic tenet is the view that the creation of the world resulted from ignorance and error."⁴⁰ Wilson has suggested a four-point summary of the second century movement:

(1) A distinction between the unknown and transcendent true God on the one hand and the Demiurge or creator of this world on the other, the latter being commonly identified with the God of the Old Testament; (2) the belief that man in his true nature is essentially akin to the divine, a spark of the heavenly light imprisoned in a material body and subjected in this world to the dominance of the Demiurge and his powers; (3) a myth narrating some kind of pre-mundane fall, to account for man's present state and his yearning for deliverance; and (4) the means, the saving *gnosis*, by which that deliverance is effected and man awakened to the consciousness of his own true nature and heavenly origin. This deliverance, and the eventual return of the imprisoned sparks of light to their heavenly abode, means in time the return of this world to its primordial chaos, and is strenuously opposed at all points by the hostile powers.⁴¹

Wilson's four basic points are probably as precise as one can be in formulating a definition of Gnosticism that will include all the second century sects. The question then is whether the NH library provides any support for pre-Christian Gnosticism.

Nag Hammadi Evidence

The basic argument for pre-Christian Gnosticism that has been deduced from the NH library is the presence of supposedly non-Christian Gnostic tractates. Of the most commonly suggested examples of non-Christian Gnostic works, three are particularly noteworthy.

A number of scholars believe that *Eugnostos the Blessed* is a non-Christian Gnostic tractate from which was created the Christian Gnostic work, *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*. *The Nag Hammadi Library*

⁴⁰Yamauchi, "Some Alleged Evidences for Pre-Christian Gnosticism," 47.

⁴¹Wilson, *Gnosis and the New Testament*, 4.

in *English* prints the texts side by side for comparison. Although there was initially some debate about the priority of *Eugnostos*, the work of Krause has convinced most scholars that *Sophia* is a re-working of *Eugnostos*.⁴² However, it is not clear that *Eugnostos* is wholly free from Christian influence. Wilson has compiled a list of possible NT and Christian allusions in *Eugnostos*.⁴³ Included among them is Son of Man, Saviour, and the Church. Also, the name *Eugnostos* appears in only one other tractate, *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, where *Eugnostos* is a Christian. Yamauchi believes that the Christian *Eugnostos* is the same person referred to in *Eugnostos the Blessed*.⁴⁴

The Apocalypse of Adam has also been hailed by some scholars as a clear example of a non-Christian Gnostic work. This tractate purports to be a revelation of Adam to Seth that recounts the salvation of Noah from the Flood and the salvation of Seth's seed from destruction by fire. The story ends with the coming of the mighty "Illuminator." It seems clear, however, that this Illuminator—who is punished in his flesh, does signs and marvels, is opposed by powers, and has the Holy Spirit descend upon him—is none other than Jesus Christ.⁴⁵

Another supposedly non-Christian Gnostic document is *The Paraphrase of Shem* in which a figure named Derdekeas gives a revelation to Shem. However, a number of scholars have pointed to parallels between Derdekeas and Christ.⁴⁶ Also, the presence of a bitter polemic against water baptism (37, 14–25) is a problem for those who maintain the non-Christian character of the tractate.⁴⁷

Even if it could be proven that any of the previously discussed works or, for that matter, any of the NH tractates are non-Christian Gnostic documents, that would not in itself be evidence for pre-Christian Gnosticism. Non-Christian is not necessarily pre-Christian. MacRae's admission is worth noting:

The NH library does nothing to resolve the classic chronological challenge to Gnostic sources. That is to say that those who demand a chronologically pre-Christian Gnostic document in order to accept the

⁴²Martin Krause, "Das literarische Verhältnis des Eugnostosbriefes zur Sophia Jesu Christi," in *Mullus: Festschrift für Theodor Klauser*, ed. A. Stuiber and A. Hermann (Münster, 1964) 215–23.

⁴³Wilson, *Gnosis and the New Testament*, 114–15.

⁴⁴Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism in the Nag Hammadi Texts?" *CH* 48 (1979) 138.

⁴⁵Yamauchi, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism in the Nag Hammadi Texts?" 132, and *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, 107–15, 217–19.

⁴⁶Yamauchi, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism in the Nag Hammadi Texts?" 136.

⁴⁷John Dart, *The Laughing Savior* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) 100. See also Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, 221.

argument that Gnosticism is older than the second century A.D. will not be shaken by the publication of a mid-fourth-century collection of Coptic translations. And even if we are on solid ground in some cases in arguing the original works represented in the library are much older than extant copies, we are still unable to postulate plausibly any pre-Christian dates.⁴⁸

Unfortunately, MacRae, Robinson, and a number of others either discount or ignore the fact that their arguments for pre-Christian Gnosticism are based upon late sources.

The Descending-Ascending Redeemer Myth

Bultmann and his followers have argued that the Christian conception of Jesus as a descending-ascending saviour figure was derived from the Gnostic redeemer myth. The classic description of the myth was set forth by Bultmann in a 1925 article.⁴⁹ He outlined twenty-eight characteristics that he considered to have constituted the original myth. Yamauchi has conveniently summarized those characteristics:

1. In the cosmic drama a heavenly 'Urmensch' or Primal Man of Light falls and is torn to pieces by demonic powers. These particles are encapsuled as the sparks of light in the 'pneumatics' of mankind.
2. The demons try to stupefy the 'pneumatics' by sleep and forgetfulness so they will forget their divine origin.
3. The transcendent Deity sends another Being of Light, the 'Redeemer,' who descends the demonic spheres, assuming the deceptive garments of a bodily exterior to escape the notice of the demons.
4. The Redeemer is sent to awaken the 'pneumatics' to the truth of their heavenly origins and gives them the necessary 'gnosis' or 'knowledge' to serve as passwords for their heavenly re-ascent.
5. The Redeemer himself re-ascends, defeating the demonic powers, and thereby makes a way for the spirits that will follow him.
6. Cosmic redemption is achieved when the souls of men are collected and gathered upward. In this process the Redeemer is himself redeemed, i.e., the Primal Man who fell in the beginning is reconstituted.⁵⁰

Bultmann believed that the writer of the Fourth Gospel was a Christian convert from a Gnostic baptist group, who Christianized the descending-ascending redeemer myth in applying it to the historical Jesus. This myth also became the source of the redemptive idea in Paul's theology.

⁴⁸ MacRae, "Nag Hammadi and the New Testament," 146-47.

⁴⁹ "Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums," *ZNW* 24 (1925) 100-146.

⁵⁰ Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, 29-30.

Bultmann's proof for the pre-Christian nature of the Gnostic redeemer myth was based on texts that considerably postdated the NT, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by a number of scholars.⁵¹ However, some of Bultmann's followers have suggested that the NH library provides new evidence which demonstrates that he was essentially correct. Robinson has stated:

The Apocalypse of Adam, a non-Christian Jewish Gnostic interpretation of Genesis, presents the redeemer as coming to the world, suffering, and triumphing. It or traditions it used may have been composed in the Syrian-Jordan region during the First Century A.D.—much the same time and place as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel of John!⁵²

While it is true that *The Apocalypse of Adam* and several other NH texts present a descending-ascending redeemer figure, it has not been clearly demonstrated that any of these tractates are free from Christian influences, as was previously discussed. Even if it could be shown that *The Apocalypse of Adam* was not influenced by the NT, there is absolutely no historical evidence that it was composed in the first century, and thus influenced John's Gospel. Yamauchi has demonstrated that *The Apocalypse of Adam* could not have been written before the second century.⁵³

The Gospel of Thomas

When it was published in 1959, this document prompted curiosity about a "fifth gospel." Actually, it is a random series of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus. About half of these correspond to sayings of Jesus in the canonical Gospels, but scarcely any are completely identical. Some sayings are similar to those known previously from patristic literature while about forty are new sayings.⁵⁴ It is possible that genuine *agrapha* (sayings of Jesus not found in the canonical Gospels) may be found in *Thomas* since the canonical Gospels do not claim to be exhaustive (John 20:30). Because some of the sayings are parallel to those in the Oxyrhynchus papyri, which can be dated to

⁵¹The most devastating criticisms have come from Carsten Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule: Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes vom gnostischen Erlösersmythos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961). Also, see Henry A. Green, "Gnosis and Gnosticism: A Study in Methodology," *Numen* 24 (1977) 95–134.

⁵²Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Codices*, 15.

⁵³Yamauchi, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism in the Nag Hammadi Texts?" 132–35 and "The Apocalypse of Adam, Mithraism, and Pre-Christian Gnosticism," in *Études Mithriaques, Textes et Mémoires*, ed. Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin (Teheran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1978) 4.537–63.

⁵⁴Andrew K. Helmbold, *The Nag Hammadi Gnostic Texts and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967) 57–58.

about A.D. 150, most scholars believe that the Greek original of *Thomas* was written about A.D. 140.⁵⁵

Robinson believes that *The Gospel of Thomas* provides evidence for the literary genre of the so-called Q (from the German *Quelle*, meaning "source") material, a hypothetical written document that was the source of the material common to Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark.⁵⁶ Both Robinson and Helmut Koester believe that *Thomas* is independent of the canonical Gospels and may even represent an earlier form of Jesus' sayings.⁵⁷ However, the independence of *Thomas* seems to be a minority opinion. Even Koester admits that the number of scholars who oppose his view is impressive.⁵⁸ Gundry's study of the problem led him to conclude that "the much later date of *The Gospel of Thomas* and the undeniable wholesale interpolation of Gnostic ideas and sayings tip the scales in favor of Gnostic editing of mostly canonical sources."⁵⁹ Thus, if *Thomas* is dependent upon the canonical Gospels, its literary genre is much later than Q. There is also an important difference between Q and *Thomas*: Q would have included narrative material, whereas *Thomas* has none.⁶⁰

Prologue of the Fourth Gospel

The problem of determining the historical background of the prologue of John's Gospel has long preoccupied a number of NT scholars. In the past, scholars have been divided into two camps.⁶¹ One camp, represented by C. H. Dodd, held that the backdrop for the prologue was to be found in Rabbinic and Philonic materials, together with the Hermetica. Dodd argued "that in the Prologue a basic Jewish (OT) theme has been interpreted in the light of the conceptuality of Hellenistic Jewish thought."⁶² The other camp,

⁵⁵ *ISBE*, 1979 ed., s.v. "Agrapha," by Edwin M. Yamauchi, 1.69.

⁵⁶ James M. Robinson, "LOGOI SOPHON: On the *Gattung* of Q," in *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, with Helmut Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 71-113.

⁵⁷ Helmut Koester, "One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels," in *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, 186.

⁵⁸ Helmut Koester, "GNOMAI DIAPHOROI: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," in *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, 130.

⁵⁹ Robert H. Gundry, "Recent Investigations into the Literary Genre 'Gospel,'" in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, 106.

⁶⁰ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (3rd ed.; Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity, 1970) 152. See also the important new study by G. Quispel, "The *Gospel of Thomas* Revisited," in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi*, ed. B. Barc (Quebec: Laval University, 1981) 218-66.

⁶¹ Robert Kysar, "The Background of the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel: A Critique of Historical Methods," *CJT* 16 (1970) 250-55.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 252.

represented by Bultmann, pointed to Gnostic sources behind the prologue. While Dodd relied heavily on the *Hermetica*, Bultmann drew parallels from the *Odes of Solomon*, neither of which can be dated earlier than the second century A.D. Kysar has aptly observed:

Both Dodd and Bultmann follow the practice of using later literature as evidence of a thought-form which, in its earlier expressions, presumably influenced those responsible for the Prologue. It would seem that such a principle, if allowed at all, opens innumerable possibilities for claiming an influence on the New Testament for ideas found only in post-first-century literature.⁶³

Robinson has again come to the rescue of Bultmann by suggesting that a NH tractate, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, demonstrates that the prologue did indeed have a Gnostic background.⁶⁴ Robinson attempts to draw thirteen parallels between *Protennoia* and John's prologue, but they are not convincing. Furthermore, Turner dates the *Protennoia* to around A.D. 200.⁶⁵ Thus, if there are any parallels between the two texts, it seems more likely that the prologue of John's Gospel was the source for *Protennoia* and not vice versa.⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

The thirteen NH codices have significantly impacted the study of early Christianity. Gnosticism is no longer known only from the outside, from what opponents of the movement recorded. Now the Gnostic teachings can be read firsthand in the forty tractates unique to the NH library. And thus, the growth of Christianity and attendant heresies are better documented and more clearly understood.

The NH library also provides helpful background to the NT. Heresies are already being confronted in the NT, and though evidence is lacking to identify those heresies clearly with the Gnosticism of the second century, similarities in some of the false teachings are unmistakable. However, students of the NT should be careful not to interpret NT references to concepts such as dualism and docetism, which later became elements in the doctrine of the second century Gnostic sects, as evidence of Gnosticism in the first century. It is true

⁶³Ibid., 254.

⁶⁴James M. Robinson, "Gnosticism and the New Testament," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, ed. Barbara Aland (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978) 128-31.

⁶⁵John D. Turner, "Introduction to the *Trimorphic Protennoia*," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 461.

⁶⁶Edwin Yamauchi, "Jewish Gnosticism? The Prologue of John, Mandaean Parallels, and the Trimorphic Protennoia," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions*, ed. R. van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 467-97.

that the roots of Gnosticism can be found in the Judaism, Christianity, and paganism of the first century, but classical Gnosticism has not yet been documented before the second century.

In this article it has only been possible to touch on several of the specific areas of NT interpretation where the NH library is now being appealed to as a source of new light. Since the interpretation of the library is still in its infancy, students of the NT will undoubtedly be hearing more about NH in the future. However, an important issue for NT studies will continue to be the question of pre-Christian Gnosticism. Now that all the tractates have been published, we can be assured, as Yamauchi has put it, "that there are no unexploded bombshells."⁶⁷ Although it is possible that a strong case may yet be made for non-Christian Gnosticism in some of the texts, non-Christian is not necessarily pre-Christian. Furthermore, NH has not produced any Gnostic documents that are prior to or even contemporary with the birth of Christianity.

Although Bultmann's hypothesis—that the source of Pauline and Johannine theology can be found in Gnostic literature—has been adopted in some reference works, such as the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, the evidence is unconvincing. In response to Bultmann, Guthrie's statement that Gnostic studies have "little value" for students of NT theology is apropos.⁶⁸ The distinction, then, is between background and source. The NH library is useful to the NT scholar as a background for the growing problem in the church with heresy, but Gnosticism was not the source for the teachings of the NT.

⁶⁷Yamauchi, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism in the Nag Hammadi Texts?" 130. Yamauchi has not changed his mind since that statement was made in 1979. See his "Pre-Christian Gnosticism, the New Testament and Nag Hammadi in Recent Debate," *Themelios* 10 (1984) 22–27.

⁶⁸Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity, 1981) 68.

DEUTERONOMY: AN EXPOSITION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

JOHN H. WALTON

In contrast to the idea that the book of Deuteronomy is a legalistic refinement of Mosaic regulations, the structure of Deuteronomy suggests that it is designed to elucidate the broader morality behind each of Ten Commandments. The book, then, is an exposition of the spirit of the Commandments. The sweeping implications of the decalogue oblige the individual to a lifestyle of moral conduct that is far broader than the "letter of the law" would suggest. Deuteronomy revolves around four major issues (authority, dignity, commitment, and rights and privileges), each of which is the focus of two or more commandments. Under each of the four issues, one commandment deals with conduct toward God and one or more with conduct toward man. When this structure is studied, it becomes clear that Moses grouped legal cases around common themes to bring a truer understanding of God's concerns and requirements as they are reflected in each command of the decalogue. Thus, there is a moral theme behind each command that creates timeless parameters for ethical conduct.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most frequently encountered questions among Christians of the last nineteen hundred years concerns the significance and applicability of the OT law for the Church. Such questions have not been limited to the laity, as theologians have grappled with the hermeneutical issues involved with cross-testamental exegesis. Careful responses need to be made to such questions in order to lay a foundation for a correct understanding of "Church and Society."

Deuteronomy, as one of the major repositories of Israelite law, has been subjected to much scrutiny in this regard. A breakthrough in the understanding of the book came in 1979 when Kaufman published his suggested correlation of the deuteronomic laws and the

decatalogue.¹ This was the first successful attempt at such a correlation and has already gained recognition as a seminal work in the area of Deuteronomy studies.²

Kaufman was of the opinion that the arrangement of the deuteronomic laws in accordance with the decatalogue was merely a literary device and that it did not necessarily betray the Israelite perception of legal classification.³ An examination of the correlations of the various sections of Deuteronomy with the decatalogue suggests, however, that the arrangement served more than a literary function. Rather, by his choice and classification of the legal material, Moses exemplified the "spirit" behind each of the ten basic laws, the decatalogue. The implication of this hypothesis is that it is not left to Christ or even to Jeremiah to recognize that the Ten Commandments are to be understood as broader in scope than the "letter of the law." Rather, the commandments serve as doors into the discussion of a transcendent morality which they are fully understood to require. In other words, the Ten Commandments, even as early as Moses, were understood to oblige the individual to a lifestyle of moral conduct both with regard to God and to man.

It is possible to identify in Deuteronomy four major issues which the decatalogue addresses and around which the laws seem to be organized. They are:

<i>MAIN ISSUES</i>	<i>RE:GOD</i>	<i>RE:MAN</i>
Authority	Commandment 1	Commandment 5
Dignity	Commandment 2	Commandments 6, 7, 8
Commitment	Commandment 3	Commandment 9
Rights and Privileges	Commandment 4	Commandment 10

AUTHORITY

Commandment 1 has as its focus the authority of God, while Commandment 5 is concerned with human authority, mostly in its relationship to divine authority. While Kaufman saw Commandments 1 and 2 combined in Deuteronomy 12, I believe Commandment 1 is

¹Stephen A. Kaufman, "The Structure of the Deuteronomic Law," *Maarav* 1/2 (1978-79) 105-58.

²Note, for instance, its influence in such works as Victor Hamilton, *Handbook On the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), and Walter Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

³Cf., e.g., Kaufman, "The Structure of the Deuteronomic Law," 125.

more closely aligned with Deuteronomy 6–11.⁴ These chapters convey the idea that God should be our first priority and final authority, and that we owe him preference and obedience.

There are two direct statements of God's authority in this section. The first is in 6:4 where the well-known *shema* presents YHWH, and YHWH alone, as God. The second direct statement is in 10:17 which speaks of YHWH as the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, and the great, mighty and awesome God. Besides these direct statements, several explicit warnings against worshiping other gods not only speak of the authority of YHWH, but seem to demonstrate that Commandment 1 is under discussion (6:13–14; 7:3–5; 9:19–20; 10:20–21; 11:16). Rather than discussing the implications of the First Commandment in legislative terms, these chapters give examples of ways that adherence to the First Commandment can be demonstrated. Included here are the exhortations to love God (6:5; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22) and to obey his commandments (6:6, 17, 24–25; 7:11–12; 8:1, 6; 10:12–13; 11:1, 8, 13, 18, 22), along with warnings against testing the Lord (6:16; 10:16). Finally, in Deuteronomy 6–11 Moses spends much time reminding the reader of how God has proven or will prove himself worthy of the respect and status that he demands. For example, Moses states that Israel is chosen and loved (7:6–8; 10:14–15), that Israel has been multiplied in keeping with the covenant promises (10:22), and that Israel was delivered out of Egypt (6:21–23; 7:19; 8:2–5, 14–16; 11:2–7). Furthermore, God is able to bring prosperity (6:10–12; 7:13–15; 8:7–13; 11:10–15) and drive out the enemy (6:19; 7:1–2, 16–18, 20–24; 9:1–6; 11:23–25) if the conditions of obedience are met. While these chapters appear at first glance to be somewhat rambling, it seems that the concept of God's authority and priority serves as a common denominator and provides a key to understanding the thoughts that are expressed.

In Commandment 5, human authority is the issue. The deuteronomic treatment of the commandment, however, does not focus on how we are to respond to human authority as much as it addresses how human authority is to conform to divine authority. It speaks of the exercise of divine authority in the human realm. The main role of human authority that is emphasized is *instruction*.

In the commandment proper (Deut 5:16), parents are seen as the basic link for the communication of instruction and for the representation of divine authority. The honor given to parents is put in the

⁴This was initially the suggestion of my colleague William Luck. For this and numerous other insights gleaned from our hours of discussion and reflected throughout this paper I am deeply indebted to him.

context of preservation of the covenant ("that you may live long in the land"), and that preservation is accomplished in the instruction of children by the parents. This commandment attempts to cover a weak link: if parental instruction is not heeded, the covenant's benefits are in jeopardy.

The deuteronomic treatment of Commandment 5 (Deut 16:18–17:13) does not speak of the role of parents, but moves to a discussion of other forms of human authority. It has the appearance of a national application of the Fifth Commandment. Each section speaks of the way in which the various authorities could place the covenant benefits in jeopardy by identifying the weakest link—the ways in which each office can fail in carrying out its responsibility before God.

The first group treated is the judges who are seen as responsible for enforcing the covenant (17:2–7). Each time a sentence is passed there is an opportunity for instruction. The weak link here would occur if the judges were not preserving the integrity of the system. So the text speaks of bribes that distort justice (16:19–20), verdicts that are not enforced (17:10–12), and cases where instruction was not heeded (17:10–12) or the lesson was not learned (17:13). These appear to be the weak links in the authority/instruction chain that could put the covenant's benefits in jeopardy.

The next office to be treated is that of the king (Deut 17:14–20). The king is viewed as God's representative and is held responsible for the people in the sense that he should set up a system that conforms to the requirements of the covenant. He is thereby seen as the administrator of the covenant. The weak links occur when he becomes preoccupied with the accoutrements of office (vv 16–17) or when he fails to observe the law. Either of these situations can cause him to fail in setting up an administration that supports the covenant. Instruction here takes place through modeling. The king models godliness to the people by governing in a way that conforms to the requirements of the covenant.

The priests and Levites had the responsibility of serving, which included teaching the people (17:10–12). Deut 18:1–8 speaks of the support of the priests and Levites by the populace. The weak link here is that if the priests were not supported they could not function and the covenant would be in jeopardy.

The last group is the prophets (18:9–22). They had the responsibility of passing on God's messages, and thus were involved in both the authority of God and in instruction. The weakest links occur if wrong authority is used (e.g., divination, vv 9–14), if the people fail to heed the prophet's words (v 19), or if the prophet speaks his own words rather than God's (v 20).

In dealing with these four groups, the biblical author moves backwards through the line of authority which starts with God communicating his instructions to the people through the prophets. After this, the priests have the responsibility of instructing the people concerning the word of God, and then the kings have the responsibility of setting up and maintaining a system based on the instructions given by God. Finally, the judges have the responsibility of enforcing the system that has been set up.

Deuteronomy may be seen to warn of areas where the covenant could be jeopardized through a break in the chain of authority and instruction. Human authorities need to be honored in that they serve as an important link in communicating God's instructions to his people. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of human authorities not to corrupt their offices by losing sight of their primary function.

DIGNITY

Commandment 2 appears to be reflected in Deut 12:1-32. The key verse is v 4: "You shall not treat the LORD your God that way." This chapter addresses the fact that Israel was not to use the things or places that were part of Canaanite worship. The Israelites were not to worship YHWH in the same way that the Canaanites worshiped their gods. This, of course, is directly related to the ban on the use of images that is the Second Commandment. The treatment in Deuteronomy confirms that the ban on images specifically concerns images of YHWH, and it further clarifies that the prohibition of images is intended to be understood in the context of worship.

It is easy to understand the concern that God has for the Israelites as they enter a land infested with Canaanites. Syncretism is the path of least resistance. So rather than allowing the Canaanite sanctuaries to be converted, only a central sanctuary is sanctioned. This would serve to assure homogeneity of religious practice and set up a priestly control of popular practice. Both of these factors would help guard against syncretism. This is especially evident with regard to the ritual elements where the closest monitoring was needed. Deut 12:30-31 again make this clear: "beware that you are not ensnared to follow after them . . . and that you do not inquire after their gods saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' You shall not behave this way."

The main thrust of the deuteronomic treatment, then, concerns how the ritual aspect of worship takes place. The Israelites are instructed not to repeat pagan rituals (of which images are a large part), and a central sanctuary is to be established to monitor the

ritual practice. The concern is that the ritual must reflect the true and unique nature of YHWH rather than accommodating the pagan standards in the world around them. The dignity of YHWH is jeopardized when he is treated as the pagans treat their deities. The point is that ritual is performed for the recognizing of no one else but YHWH. Thus, ritual should never accommodate the world's standards. Rather, all ritual must reflect true worship on the part of the individual. True worship cannot take place if ritual becomes an end in itself. True worship must give God his proper place. It cannot be manipulative or self-serving, for that robs God of the dignity that the worship is intended to recognize.

Corresponding to Commandment 2 and its concern with the preservation of the dignity of God are three commandments (6, 7 and 8) that are concerned with preserving the dignity of man. Commandment 6 appears to be treated in Deut 19:1–21:23. This section, for the most part, seeks to delineate what is really behind the prohibition against murder by discussing some of the instances in which life is being taken, but where murder has not been committed. As a result we find sections on the following:

1. Accidental homicide and the connected discussion of the function of the levitical cities (19:1–13);
2. The requirement of two witnesses in a capital case (since capital punishment involves the taking of a life and the witnesses are implicated in the taking of life; 19:15);
3. The treatment of malicious witnesses (19:16–20) who are put to death if the case is a capital case;
4. The *lex talionis* as a protection against a judicial taking of life where the crime would not call for that serious a punishment (19:21).

Chap. 20 then proceeds to discuss the rules for warfare, another situation in which life is being taken, but the commandment is not being broken. In chap. 21, miscellaneous issues are treated such as caring for bloodguilt when the murderer is unknown. This demonstrates that the issue of murder must be dealt with not only on the level of punishing the murderer, but also in terms of absolving bloodguilt on the land (21:1–9). Also mentioned are the guidelines for dealing with the rebellious child (21:18–21) and for the treatment of a capital punishment victim (21:22–23). The prohibition of murder is designed to protect the dignity of the individual from a minimalist perspective. That is, everyone deserves the dignity of existence. Deuteronomy appears to be suggesting exceptions to that general rule. A murderer has forfeited his right to that dignity, and war is another matter altogether. In this section there are also portions that do not

fit this commandment easily, though they can be seen to impact the dignity issue (19:14; 21:10–17). These will require more study.

Commandment 7, which would seem to connect with 22:1–23:14, is one of the most difficult to fit together. Chap. 22:1–12 deals with a number of diverse issues, some of which can be tied to dignity, some of which seem more suitable to the issue of integrity, and some which do not seem to fit well at all. This sort of development always causes one to question his own system of organization. However, the apparently smooth operation of the classification system throughout the rest of the material leads to the hope that this is merely a case of the elusive nature of these specific examples. Perhaps others will be able to suggest suitable solutions.

Deut 22:12–30 treats the various types of adultery including inferred adultery (13–21), simple adultery (22), rape (23–29), and incest (30). These all threaten the dignity of the family. Chap. 23:1–14 speaks of the relationship of emasculated, illegitimate, and foreign individuals to the assembly, as well as the matter of cleanness in the camp. These both have to do with preserving the dignity of the camp.

Commandment 8, the prohibition against stealing, seems to be treated in Deut 23:15–24:7 with regard to preserving the dignity of individuals. By his treatment of the issue, the author attempts to deal with the question of *why* stealing is wrong. By seeing dignity as the basic element behind the prohibition, he is able to discuss other areas that are impacted by the commandment. Deut 23:15–20 speaks of stealing intangible things. The case of the foreign slave who has escaped to the land is a situation where Israelites are prohibited from stealing his freedom (a dignity issue). Deut 23:17–18, in singling out daughters and sons, implies that these individuals are being forced into prostitution, thus having their self-respect stolen. Deut 23:19–20 forbids the charging of interest within the institution of debt slavery in that that is like stealing the interest from the debtor, as well as robbing him of the ability to recover. Again, in the end, this robs him of his self-respect.

Deut 23:21–23 speaks of stealing from God by not paying one's vows. This seems unusual in the context of preserving human dignity, and, as yet, the reason for its being here has not been identified.

Deut 23:24–25 attempts to draw the line concerning what is stealing and what is not by giving a guideline for picking food on someone else's property. It also serves to preserve the dignity of poor travelers who gain their subsistence in this way.

Deut 24:1–4 covers the well-known case where a man is prohibited from remarrying a woman whom he has divorced and who has been married to someone else in the meantime. Here the legislation does not treat the issue of divorce but rather appears to be

concerned about preserving the woman's self-respect by forbidding that she be treated as a piece of property. The indecency found in her (v 1) cannot be adultery, for the text has affirmed in the previous chapter that adultery is a capital crime. Rather, the indecency ought to be considered a matter of technicality⁵ that the husband is using as an excuse to discard the woman. This would again be an issue of stealing her dignity from her.

Deut 24:5-6 speaks of stealing the things that are essential for survival. Military conscription of a newly-married man is depriving the new wife of her conjugal rights and of the privilege of bearing children (for her new husband might be slain in battle). Likewise, the theft of major food-producing implements is more than theft of goods, it is the stealing of an individual's ability to provide for himself and his family. Thus the issue of stealing is expanded far beyond the confines of the simple notion of taking some object that belongs to someone else. Most of this section deals with intangibles and is concerned with the dignity, rights, and self-respect of others which must not be violated. This is emphasized again in the last prohibition of this section.

Deut 24:7 deals with kidnapping. It is interesting to note, however, that it treats only one specific kidnapping situation. That is, it identifies kidnapping as a capital crime when it is either connected with violence or with the sale of the kidnapped individual. Presumably if neither of these related crimes occurred, kidnapping would not be a capital crime. Kidnapping in general was prohibited by the Eighth Commandment without further elaboration. But here the legislation is protecting the dignity of the kidnapped individual even further by placing a stricter punishment on anyone who would abuse the victim.

⁵The ערות דבר referred to in Deut 24:1 could not be adultery, for 22:22 has just condemned the adulterer to death. The term is used elsewhere only in Deut 23:14 where it describes the situation in which excrement is not properly cared for. It is significant also that the woman is not prevented from remarrying, and there is no prohibition against the first husband remarrying the woman if another marriage has not intervened. Likewise, the woman is not "defiled" if she marries anyone but the first husband. The verbal stem used to reflect the defilement in v 4 is the unusual *hōthpaʿal*, which appears to involve passive, causative, and reflexive or durative elements. For this reason, I would interpret the defilement as something that would be brought upon her by her first husband should he attempt to remarry her. This is treated under Commandment 8 which suggests that Deut 24:1 is not dealing with a sexual sin per se, but with a situation in which the woman has been robbed of her dignity. A possibility is that the husband has used a menstrual dysfunction as a legal loophole and excuse to divorce the woman. After this kind of humiliation, he is prevented from acting as if it never happened and "graciously" taking her back again. The second marriage is brought into the case as the indicator that the first husband totally repudiated the woman.

COMMITMENT

Commandments 3 and 9 seem to deal with the issue of commitment. These two commandments have often been identified together because of the similarity of their subject matter, and this schema supports even further that connection.

Commandment 3 seems to be treated in Deut 13:1–14:21 and addresses in various ways the problem of not taking God seriously enough or not taking one's relationship, commitment, or obligations to God seriously enough, which is part of the same problem.

Deut 13:1–5 concern the false prophet. The false prophet's activity is identified in v 3 as a test from God, "to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart." If an individual is serious about God, the described behavior will be offensive and intolerable. The end of v 5 makes it clear that the concern is to "purge evil from among you." Commandment 3 speaks of how God treats those who do not take him seriously ("God will not hold him guiltless"). This chapter follows up on that by suggesting that if one is not offended by those who do not take God or their commitment to God seriously, then he is guilty along with them. He should not hold them guiltless or he becomes an accomplice. If he tolerates wicked behavior and fails to purge it out, he is not taking God seriously. The enticement to worship other gods is used here as an example—any wicked behavior would qualify.

In vv 6–11, wickedness even in one's relatives or friends should not be tolerated. It is suggested in vv 12–18 that even if a whole town is involved, there should be no mercy. So whether the offender is a highly respected religious authority, a good friend, or a large group of people, wicked behavior cannot be tolerated.

Chap. 13 uses the hypothetical case of the most blatant and basic offense—enticement to serve other gods. In that case, being serious about a relationship with God requires immediate and total purging. In contrast, chap. 4 uses a hypothetical case of something that is tangential and subtle.

Chap. 14 is, of course, the section concerning the dietary laws. Wenham, following the research of Douglas, an anthropologist, has suggested that "holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong."⁶ The unclean animals are those that in one way or another fail to conform to the expectations of the animal group to which they belong. Concerning the restriction on the Israelites to eat only clean animals, Wenham explains,

⁶Gordon Wenham, "The Theology of Unclean Food," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 53 (1981) 11. My thanks to my colleague, Dennis Magary, for bringing this article to my attention.

Their diet was limited to certain meats in imitation of their God, who had restricted his choice among the nations to Israel. It served, too, to bring to mind Israel's responsibilities to be a holy nation. As they distinguished between clean and unclean foods, they were reminded that holiness was more than a matter of meat and drink but a way of life characterized by purity and integrity.⁷

The connection here would be that while seriousness about God requires severe action in blatant cases (chap 13), it requires a response that is *above reproach* in the subtle cases ("gray areas"). In many cases there would have been nothing innately wrong with eating the listed animals, but the truly committed person would demonstrate his commitment to God even in his diet. This is holiness through symbol and analogy (not unlike baptism). In chap. 13 the preaching of an individual was leading the people astray, and the person who was preaching needed to be put to death if God was to be taken seriously. In chap. 14 the practice of an individual is an indicator of that individual's commitment to God and holiness in his life. This is an important step for the person who is taking his relationship to God seriously.

Commandment 3 is paralleled by Commandment 9 which treats three areas:

1. Taking your commitments to your fellow man seriously;
2. Assuming that he is going to take his commitment to you seriously;
3. Not making false accusations.

The common denominator between these areas and the decalogue's injunction against bearing false witness is the matter of *trust*—trusting one another to do what has been agreed upon. This is the important issue in the case of false witness. It was frequently impossible to determine by objective means whether an individual was telling the truth in court cases. The entire justice system, and therefore the whole fabric of society, was dependent on being able to trust the word of a witness. For trust to exist in a society, individuals must have the confidence that commitments are being taken seriously.

The section in Deuteronomy that deals with this commandment is Deut 24:8–16, though others would extend the section as far as Deut 25:4. The verses in question, 24:17–25:4 could fit with either commandment and may serve as a transition section, but it seems to fit better into the Commandment 10 discussion.

Deut 24:8–9 introduces the section by referring to the example of Miriam. Here, a case of false accusation against Moses is adduced to

⁷Ibid., 12.

remind the reader of the strict punishment that may accompany a violation of this commandment.

Deut 24:10–13 deals with the handling of a situation where an individual is the holder of his poor neighbor's pledge. The reader is admonished not to act in such a way that he would betray a lack of trust in his neighbor. He is not to think so poorly of his neighbor as to protect himself against the neighbor's not fulfilling his pledge. This is the same kind of statement that in Commandment 3 admonished the reader not to imagine that God would not defend things that were said in his name.

Deut 24:14–15 instructs the Israelites concerning pledges and agreements. Everyone has the obligation to establish his own trustworthiness by carrying out the agreements he has made, and even further, by being sensitive to the needs of those who are depending on him to meet their needs.

Deut 24:16 prohibits punishing someone for a crime that he did not commit. To punish an innocent person is like bearing false witness against him.

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

Commandments 4 and 10 speak of rights and privileges. Commandment 4 speaks of God's rights, and Commandment 10 addresses the issue of human rights.

In the decalogue, the focus in Commandment 4 is on the Sabbath. God has a right to be honored through the dedication of a special day to him in gratitude for his deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Deuteronomy 5) and in remembrance of his creative work (Exodus 20). Deuteronomy seems to pick up from that point by discussing other things one might dedicate to God in gratitude or commemoration to honor him. Deut 14:22–16:17 suggests showing gratitude to God as the source of one's goods (tying into Creation) and as the source of one's freedom (tying into the Exodus) by dedicating some of one's goods to him and by becoming a source of goods and freedom to others in his name.

In this connection Deut 14:22–29 begins by discussing the tithe. This is giving a portion of one's goods back to God in gratitude. Every third year this tithe is to go to the support of the community. Other elements of this section include the following:

1. During the seventh year no payment is to be expected toward long term debts of fellow Israelites (15:1–3). This is an act of compassion because observance of the fallow year would mean that there was no guaranteed income that year.
2. Willingly lending to the poor among Israel (15:4–11)

3. A six year limit to debt slavery of a fellow Hebrew is set (15:12–18)
4. Firstling sacrifice (15:19–23)
5. Passover (16:1–8)
6. Feast of weeks and first fruits (16:9–12)
7. Feast of Booths (16:13–15)

All of these involve the setting apart of time or goods to give honor to God in gratitude. This is the right of God and our privilege: he demands of us goods and acts of compassion, just as he provides goods and acts of compassion.

Commandment 10 in the decalogue admonishes against coveting. Coveting something is desiring something that does not belong to one. It oversteps the bounds of what one has a right to possess. Deuteronomy appears to expand this thinking into the whole area of violating the rights and privileges of others. The rights of others are to be preserved just as the rights of God needed to be preserved in the Fourth Commandment.

Deut 24:17–18 speaks of the right to justice—the basic right of all, even those who are most vulnerable. In connection to this, the Israelites are reminded of the time when they lost all their rights (in Egypt). The reminder occurs elsewhere in the Deuteronomistic code only in the parallel section elaborating Commandment 4 (5:15; 15:15; 16:12).

Deut 24:19–22 deals with the right of the poor to the leftovers of the harvest. Deut 25:1–3 speaks of the right of the innocent that punishment be made in full and the right of the guilty that a limit be set for being beaten. Deut 25:4 speaks of the right of the ox. Deut 25:5–10 deals with the institution of levirate marriage—a protection of the rights of the dead brother's family. Deut 25:11–12 addresses the violation of the rights of the individual who is being attacked. His right to bear children is being threatened without due process. Deut 25:13–16 speaks of the right to fair treatment in the marketplace. Deut 25:17–19 uses the example of the Amalekites' taking unfair advantage of the vulnerable ones in the wilderness.

Finally, 26:1–15 addresses the issue of first fruits as a way of remembering the rights and privileges that the Israelites were enjoying that their forefathers did not enjoy. There is also a stress on the third year tithe, which should be considered a right of the poor.

The commandment itself, then, has focused on coveting as a violation of the rights that others have to their own property. The Deuteronomistic treatment moves beyond this to the basic issues of human rights, justice and fair treatment.

CONCLUSION

Based on this preliminary study, it is suggested that a working hypothesis may be established that views the deuteronomic law (chaps. 6–26) as an expansion of the decalogue with the intent of addressing the spirit of the law. That is, the decalogue has implications concerning conduct that far transcend the limited number of issues that it addresses directly. The author is accomplishing this task by choosing exemplary cases that are intended to highlight the attitudes implied by the initial commandment. In other words, the author is presenting implications of the decalogue by developing a legislative portfolio for each of the commands—all with the express purpose of moving beyond legalism to a truer understanding of God's concerns and requirements. This then is much the same as what Christ does in the Sermon on the Mount. When the Lord extrapolates from the commandment against murder to the idea that hateful anger falls into the category of murder (Matt 5:21–22), he is continuing the deuteronomic treatment of the decalogue that has been suggested herein. Morality is more than a list of rules. The spirit of those rules must be discerned and heeded. Both Moses in Deuteronomy and Christ in the Sermon on the Mount show that the prohibition against murder is a prohibition against things murderous, whether attitudes or actions.

While much more work is needed, if this working hypothesis is true, it implies that the Deuteronomic code is relevant to the church because it elucidates not the letter but the spirit of the law. While the law in some ways has passed away, the validity of the spirit behind the law can never pass away, for it is a reflection of an absolute morality.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

WALT RUSSELL

C. H. Dodd, in The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, errs in acceding to Bultmann's influence by attributing much of Johannine theology to Hellenistic thought, especially in the realm of pneumatology. Actually, John's theology of the Spirit is based on themes found in OT eschatological passages, themes that are shared by John with the rest of the NT, especially Luke-Acts. When one examines the themes of Messiah's baptism of others with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit's own regenerating work as he incorporates believers into Messiah's kingdom, and the Spirit's enabling of Messiah's followers to proclaim the Gospel, it is clear that John (along with the NT in general) shares these ideas with the OT prophets and has not imbibed them from Hellenistic sources.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

IN his monumental work, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, C. H. Dodd concludes that the author of the fourth gospel faithfully reproduces the main articles of the tradition of Jewish eschatology dealing with God's πνεῦμα. This tradition understood that the Messiah, or the people of God in the age to come, or both, would be invested with the divine πνεῦμα in the sense of prophetic inspiration (John 1:32-33; 3:34; 7:39; 14:16-17; 20:22).¹ Dodd then states: "It does not however follow that the meaning he attached to the term πνεῦμα coincided exactly with its meaning in other NT writings."² Dodd argues that while John's usage may have had roots in a Hebrew mindset, it ended up largely compatible with Hellenistic thought.³ He then concludes:

¹C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1953) 222.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 223-26.

Accordingly, the gift of the Spirit to the Church is represented, not as if it were a separate outpouring of divine power under the forms of wind and fire (as in the Acts), but as the ultimate climax of the personal relations between Jesus and His disciples: ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ["He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"] (John 20:22).⁴

Such an understanding is increasingly popular in this existential age. Dodd certainly heightens its appeal with amazing erudition by drawing out some of the unique Johannine nuances of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

However, it is the thesis of this article that in contrast to Dodd the view of the Holy Spirit in John's gospel⁵ is essentially the same as that in the rest of the NT—especially Luke–Acts. While John uses more intimate and personal language, both he and Luke nevertheless speak consistently of the Holy Spirit in the terminology of OT eschatology. This common backdrop results in a Lucan and Johannine sharing of at least two themes: that the giving of the Spirit inaugurates a new age centered in Messiah and his eschatological program, and that the Spirit empowers believers to engage in a "prophetic" and universal ministry of proclaiming the gospel.⁶ This view directly counters the view championed by Bultmann which attributes Johannine terminology to Hellenistic influence.⁷ While Dodd also sought to oppose this view, he nonetheless made some concessions to it. The discovery of Johannine-type terminology in the pristine Jewish atmosphere of Qumran now reveals such concessions to be patently erroneous. As Brown has said,

The critical import of the parallels between the Scrolls and John is that one can no longer insist that the abstract language spoken by Jesus in the Fourth Gospel *must* have been composed in the Greek world of the

⁴Ibid., 227. Translation is mine.

⁵While I believe that the author of the fourth gospel was the Apostle John, proving this position is considerably beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, the use of "John" can be taken simply as the traditionally-used name for the author. See L. Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 215–92, and L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 8–30, for recent defenses of this ancient view. See also the remarkable defense of the Apostle John's authorship in J. A. T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*, ed. by J. F. Coakley (London: SCM, 1985).

⁶See W. Russell, "The Anointing with the Holy Spirit in Luke–Acts," *TrinJ* NS 7 (1986) 52, 57.

⁷See particularly R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1951) 2.3–92, and R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971).

early second century A.D. What Jesus says in John would have been quite intelligible in the sectarian background of first-century Palestine.⁸

Thus, Dodd's acknowledging of Hellenistic philosophy—especially Platonic thought—as a significant influence upon John's categories is a syncretism that never occurred. These categories apparently appeared in both John and Qumran from the common source of OT eschatology. This is not to deny that John wrote in a manner sensitive to the Gentile Hellenists who were a part of his audience,⁹ but it is to affirm that Dodd (and Bultmann) overstated the ideological impact that this sensitivity had on John's gospel—especially regarding the Spirit. This article will explore John's systematic presentation of the Holy Spirit from the perspective of OT Messianic expectation, interacting with Dodd's position and others as the discussion progresses.

BAPTISM WITH THE SPIRIT

The Messiah's baptism of others with the Holy Spirit distinguishes the messianic age from the present one (John 1:32–33; 3:34). John 1:19–51 is the Evangelist's treatment of the ministry of John the Baptist and of some of his disciples. The pivotal event is Jesus' baptism, and it is treated in similar fashion to the synoptics,¹⁰ yet with Johannine uniqueness. For example, the Baptist's identification of Jesus as the Lamb of God (v 29), the emphasis on Jesus' pre-existence over the Baptist (vv 30–31), the fact that the Spirit "remained" [ἔμεινεν] on Jesus (v 32), and the retrospective narration of the baptism (vv 32–34) are not found in the synoptics. If John is writing a later and supplementary gospel (as most commentators recognize), these new insights are significant.

Perhaps most important for this discussion, however, is the account recording the transfer of loyalty to Jesus by some of the Baptist's disciples. Given the widespread existence of the

⁸R. Brown, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament," in *John and Qumran*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972) 8.

⁹Cf. W. Nicoll, "The History of Johannine Research during the Past Century," *Neotestamentica* 6 (1972) 13: "Many leading scholars recently expressed the opinion that the Mid-East was permeated with a kind of pre-Gnosticism in the first century and that the Fourth Gospel shows a general relatedness to it . . . If a Gnostic feeling of life therefore formed the climate in the city or town of the Fourth Evangelist, it is to be expected that his preaching would show signs of his using the language of his environment . . . aimed at convincing hearers with a Gnostic frame of mind."

¹⁰Cf. S. S. Smalley, "Salvation Proclaimed VIII. John 1:29–34," *ExpTim* 93 (1982) 327: "Like the synoptic writers, the gift of the Spirit is seen by the author of John's gospel as an act of consecration, showing that Jesus is both royal Messiah (cf. Isa 11:1–5; 61:1–3) and suffering, messianic Servant of God (cf. Isa 42:1–4)."

master/disciple relationship in both the Greek and Jewish cultures of the Mediterranean world,¹¹ this transfer of loyalty was pregnant with meaning to John's readers. Certainly Jewish readers would understand that Jesus' authority now superseded the authority of the first great prophet in Israel in over four hundred years (cf. 1:19–21). To emphasize this, the gospel writer speaks only of John's baptism in terms of its water content (v 31), while contrasting it to Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit (v 33). John's water baptism was for Israel (v 31) and places him in continuity with the *present age*. Messiah's permanent possession of the Holy Spirit (v 32) and his baptizing of others with the Spirit signals the beginning of the long-awaited *Messianic Age* (Isa 11:1–2; 42:1; 48:16; 59:21; 61:1–2; and Isa 32:15; 44:3–5; Ezek 18:31; 36:25–27; 37:14; 39:39; Joel 2:28–32). The significance for those who follow Messiah is that they will now take part in the era characterized by the Spirit being given without measure (John 3:34).¹² Therefore, the transfer of loyalty by John the Baptist's disciples was a significant step. They would partake of the prophesied eschatological baptism of the Spirit and speak of it, not of their former teacher's baptism of repentance. As prophetic trainees, if you will, they entered into the new realm of the abiding Spirit when they chose to follow Jesus the Messiah.

REGENERATION BY THE SPIRIT

While the sacramental¹³ and physiological interpretations¹⁴ of Jesus' conversation with the Pharisee Nicodemus persist, these views tend to blend together how Nicodemus would understand Jesus' words and how John wanted his readers to understand them. As Dodd has noted,¹⁵ the overarching theme of John 2–4 is "The New

¹¹See K. H. Rengstorf, "μαθητής," *TDNT* (1967) 4.415–61, for a good overview of the Greek and Jewish understanding of being a "disciple."

¹²Dodd, *Interpretation*, 310–11, confesses an inability to determine whether God the Father or God the Son is the giver of "the Spirit without measure" in John 3:34, while C. K. Barrett sees the sense of the passage as referring to God the Father giving the Spirit to Jesus (*The Gospel According to John* [2nd ed; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979] 226). Barrett's view fits the context of John 3 and underscores the fact that Jesus is given the authority to baptize with the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit because the Father has given the Spirit without measure to him.

¹³See R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John 1–12* (AB 29; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1966) 137–44 for a discussion of recent adherents of this interpretation.

¹⁴See M. Pamment, "A Short Note on John 3:5," *NovT* 25 (1983) 189–90 for a recent defense of this interpretation. For a differing understanding of this passage, see R. W. Paschal, "Sacramental Symbolism and Physical Imagery in the Gospel of John," *TynBul* 32 (1981) 159–61.

¹⁵Dodd, *Interpretation*, 297–317.

Beginning" that Jesus has brought. His new order transcends Judaism as represented by Nicodemus and the exact nature of this newness seems to be the crux of the discussion between Jesus and this Pharisee. In the course of the conversation, both Nicodemus's misunderstanding¹⁶ and Jesus' expressions of double meaning¹⁷ play significant roles in giving this dialogue its enduring quality. Nicodemus is functioning out of a concrete, Old Covenant mindset greatly supplemented by many decades of authoritative oral traditions. Jesus speaks from the perspective of the new beginning of the eschatological age that he inaugurates in this era of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

At issue with this Sanhedrin Pharisee is entrance into this age—Messiah's kingdom (3:3). To enter one must be born *from above* (ἄνωθεν). Nicodemus understands this very concretely as born *again*—an equally plausible meaning for ἄνωθεν. Jesus' paraphrasing of "born from above" is to be "born of water and the Spirit" in 3:5.

How would Nicodemus (and the readers) most naturally understand this? It seems inescapable that "water" in both contexts must refer to purification from sin and defilement. Not only did John the Baptist's baptism build on this understanding, but Pharisaic ritual washings were a foundational part of their life of table fellowship (cf. Mark 7:1–23). John's readers had already been informed of the Pharisaic need for an abundant amount of water for this purification (John 2:6). Therefore, it seems rather straightforward of Jesus to use this common symbol. Under the Old Covenant the Pharisees had taken the priestly cleansings with water (e.g., Lev 16:4), democratized them, and thereby carried them to an absurd end. Jesus previously commented on what he thought of their abundant use of water by turning it into Messianic wine (John 2:1–11)! This gives an ironic twist to Jesus' mentioning of the need for water to Nicodemus.

However, much more important than irony is Jesus' point that the water needed is not Old Covenant water (which is now wine!), but New Covenant water. Jesus' use of water and Spirit with Nicodemus must have immediately brought to mind one of the clearest OT passages on the inauguration of the New Covenant Age—Ezek 36:25–27. Jesus' point seems to be that purification by water is needed to enter the kingdom of God, but it is not by water "from below" used by the Pharisees, but water "from above" that only God can send. The whole thrust of Ezekiel's prophecy seems to be that God will

¹⁶See M. de Jonge, "Nicodemus and Jesus: Some Observations on Misunderstanding and Understanding in the Fourth Gospel," *BJRL* 53 (1970–71) 337–59 and D. A. Carson, "Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel," *TynBul* 33 (1982) 59–91.

¹⁷For a recent study see E. Richard, "Expressions of Double Meaning and Their Function in the Gospel of John," *NTS* 31 (1985) 96–112.

inaugurate the New Covenant form of his kingdom with Israel by pouring out water from above for cleansing (Ezek 36:25) and by pouring out his Spirit from above for a new obedience (Ezek 36:26–27). This heavenly outpouring is the prior necessity to entering the kingdom under the New Covenant. Isaiah echoes this in 44:1–5 when he states: “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants” (v 3). The prophet goes on to say: “One will say, ‘I belong to the Lord,’ another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, ‘The Lord’s,’ and will take the name Israel” (v 5). God’s heavenly outpouring is the precursor to Israel’s full possession of his kingdom blessings.¹⁸

The gospel writer reinforces this understanding about the Holy Spirit in John 4:24 and 6:63. In 4:24 while speaking with the Samaritan woman, Jesus asserts the universality of New Covenant worship for all peoples. Such worship is decentralized geographically (not in Jerusalem or at Mt. Gerizim) and centralized personally. Worship is mediated through the person of the Holy Spirit to ensure its truthfulness for all peoples. In this age of the abiding Spirit, he aids anyone who genuinely wants to worship God, regardless of their ethnic group or geographical location. This is necessary because “it is the Spirit who gives life” (6:63a). Using the words that Jesus spoke, which are spirit and life (6:63b), the Holy Spirit bestows the life from above. This is the life that draws those who believe into Messiah’s kingdom.

EMPOWERING BY THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit also personally enables Messiah’s followers to proclaim his gospel to the nations like the prophets of old. The decentralized, universal worship of God under the New Covenant is mediated by the Holy Spirit under Messiah’s authority as has already been seen in the brief, but powerful words of John 4:24. How the Spirit mediates the universal harvest that has already begun (4:35) is further explained by John (John 7:37–39; 14–16; 20:22).

John 7:37–39

For sheer picturesque imagery and vividness, John 7:37–39 is unmatched among passages about the Holy Spirit. The setting is the

¹⁸See Z. C. Hodges, “Water and Spirit—John 3:5,” *BSac* 135 (1978) 206–20 for an understanding of “water and Spirit” as “water and wind.” He sees Isa 44:1–5 and Ezek 37:9–10 as the OT proof-texts behind this double metaphor for the work of the Holy Spirit.

Feast of Booths or Tabernacles (John 7:2). As many have noted, the liturgy of this Jewish festival was dominated by the themes of water and light (see m.Sukk. 3–4).¹⁹ Sensitive to the opportunities for teaching provided by these themes, Jesus apparently delivered a sermon on each while at the feast (“water” in John 7 and “light” in John 8). We also know that Zechariah 12–14 was a central passage in the liturgy of the festival²⁰—probably because the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned in the eschatological setting of Zechariah 14. This passage has been championed as the OT Scripture behind Jesus’ words along with Exod 17:5–6; Num 20:7–11; Ps 78:15–16; Prov 5:15; 18:4; Isa 12:3; 55:1; 58:11; and others.²¹ Some also strongly conjecture that Ezek 47:1–12 provided the OT backdrop for understanding the daily water ceremonies during the feast.²² Since the reference to the OT in John 7:38 is singular and vague (“as the Scripture said”), it has been difficult choosing among the many OT texts relating to water and the Spirit. While there may be some difficulties in matching up the imagery of Zechariah 12–14 with John 7:37–39, it still seems to be the most straightforward choice as the primary Scripture because of its use as a Tabernacle’s *haphtarah* and its immediate familiarity to the festival hearers.

Several scholars have suggested that the punctuation of the traditional English translations of John 7:38 is incorrect and that Christ, not the believer, is the one from whom the living waters flow.²³ However, Cortes and others²⁴ have shown that such suggestions are inadequate and that the believer is clearly the source of the rivers of living water. The introductory τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν (“this he said”) in John 7:39 demands that the immediately preceding statement be a reference to the believer by Jesus and not a part of John’s editorial comment.

It well may be that Jesus used Zechariah 12–14 not only because it was a part of the festival liturgy, but also because it was loved by the Jews for its promise of judgment upon the oppressor nations

¹⁹See Dodd, *Interpretation*, 345–54 and particularly A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 92–120 for a full development of this dual theme in John 7–8.

²⁰See I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1917, 1924; reprint ed.; New York: Ktav, 1967) 1.11–12.

²¹See Brown, *The Gospel According to John 1–12*, 321–23 for a discussion of these OT texts.

²²For example, Z. C. Hodges, “Rivers of Living Water—John 7:37–39,” *BSac* 139 (1979) 239–48 and B. Grigsby, “Gematria and John 21:11—Another Look at Ezekiel 47:10,” *ExpTim* 95 (1984) 177–78.

²³See Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 320–21 for some of these attempts.

²⁴J. B. Cortes, “Yet Another Look at Jn 7:37–38,” *CBQ* 29 (1967) 75–86; G. Fee, “Once More—John 7:37–39,” *ExpTim* 89 (1978) 116–18; and Hodges, “Rivers of Living Water,” 239–43.

(Zech 14:1-7, 12-19). This judgment will take place when the Lord is King over the whole earth (14:9). He will then literally raise up Jerusalem (14:10), make her secure forever (14:11), and collect the wealth of the nations for her (14:14). Jerusalem will finally be the center of worship for all the nations, and they will come to her to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (14:16-21).

Jesus' point in using such a passage is that he was soon going to establish his kingdom over the nations, but his agenda *at the present time* was not judgment, but gracious preaching (cf. Isa 61:1-2 in Luke 4:16-30). At his return Jerusalem would be the cup that makes the nations reel and the flaming torch that ignites them in judgment (Zech 12:1-9). Also at that time, the spirit of grace and supplication would be poured out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and "they will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son" (14:10; cf. John 19:34-37).

Most significant for this discussion is the statement, "on that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity" (Zech 13:1). Jesus' (and John's) point seems to be that worship of the Father is not presently centralized around a fountain in Jerusalem, *per se*, but in the Person of Jesus the Messiah. *He* is the fountain that will be opened in Jerusalem (cf. John 19:34). As Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). John now clarifies in his editorial comment that this overflowing spring/river of living water is the overflow of the Holy Spirit in the life of each believer in Jesus (John 7:39). That is why the worship of God is now decentralized from Jerusalem and centralized around faith in Jesus via the mediation of the Holy Spirit (John 4:24). He who comes to drink by faith from Jesus will himself "become an 'intermediate source' through whom the living waters he receives from God's son will flow."²⁵ In other words, in the terms of Zech 13:1, the nations do not have to come to Jerusalem for the fountain, but the personal, individual extensions of the Living Fountain can now overflow to the nations.²⁶

²⁵Hodges, "Rivers of Living Water," 243.

²⁶Note that John informs the readers of his focus on the nations in this context by including the ironic statement of the Jews in John 7:35: "The Jews therefore said to one another, 'Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?'" For a recent study that sees "the Jews" in John as basically the leaders of the nation, see U. C. von Wahlde, "The Johannine 'Jews': A Critical Survey," *NTS* 28 (1982) 33-60.

Rather than judgment upon the nations, this message about the Feast of Tabernacles brings only good news. The overflow of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Messiah's followers ensures that.

John 14-16

The four occurrences of the term παράκλητος (John 14:16; 26; 15:26; 16:7) in conjunction with the four occurrences of πνεῦμα (John 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13) have aroused an enormous amount of scholarly debate over the last decades.²⁷ Establishing the exact meaning of παράκλητος has been no easy task because of its rarity in Greek literature and its broad usage. Some have emphasized a legal sense and have argued for the translation "advocate" (e.g. Liddell-Scott, 1313; Behm in *TDNT*, 5.803; and the majority of Johannine commentators since). Some have emphasized the LXX usage and suggest (Eschatological) "Comforter,"²⁸ while others speak of the Paraclete as "the Spirit of Christian paraclesis [messianic proclamation]."²⁹ Brown advises transliteration because, like love, the term is "a many-splendoured thing!"³⁰ The most reasonable solution seems to be that suggested recently by Grayston in his excellent diachronic study.³¹ He advocates a general, flexible term like "supporter" or "sponsor." This fits the usage of παράκλητος from the fourth century B.C. to the third century A.D. and explains John's focus on various aspects of this broad term in his four gospel usages.³² In these occurrences and all others, παράκλητος is someone usually more

²⁷For example, see R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 566-72; H. Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, trans. J. W. Cox (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968); R. E. Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 13 (1966-67) 113-32; Barrett, *The Gospel According to John*, 454-55; J. Painter, "The Farewell Discourses and the History of Johannine Christianity," *NTS* 27 (1981) 525-43; F. F. Segovia, "The Theology and Provenance of John 15:1-17," *JBL* 101 (1982) 115-28; F. F. Segovia "John 15:18-16:4a: A First Addition to the Original Farewell Discourse?" *CBQ* 45 (1983) 210-30; D. B. Woll, "The Departure of 'The Way': The First Farewell Discourse in the Gospel of John," *JBL* 99 (1980) 225-39; A. R. C. Leaney, "The Johannine Paraclete and the Qumran Scrolls," in *John and Qumran*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972) 38-61; and A. Shafatt, "Geber of the Qumran Scrolls and the Spirit-Paraclete of the Gospel of John," *NTS* 27 (1981) 263-69.

²⁸J. G. Davies, "The Primary Meaning of παράκλητος," *JTS* n.s. 4 (1953) 35-38.

²⁹Barrett, *The Gospel According to John*, 461-63.

³⁰Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," 118-19.

³¹K. Grayston, "The Meaning of PARAKLETOS," *JSNT* 13 (1981) 67-82.

³²Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," 118, summarizes how John uses the term to speak of a *witness* in defense of Jesus and a *spokesman* for him in his trial-context, a *consoler* of the disciples, and, most importantly, a *helper* of them as a teacher and guide.

prominent and powerful who comes alongside to support or sponsor one in need—sometimes in a legal context.³³

Παράκλητος is appropriate in the setting of John 14–16 because Jesus is commissioning the disciples to carry on his work on earth. More specifically, the genre appears to be that of prophetic commissioning, as several have observed.³⁴ Such an overwhelming task demands heavenly support and sponsorship. This Jesus provides with his eschatological gift to his disciples—the promised Holy Spirit—and his upper room teaching explains exactly how the Spirit will be their sponsor in the work of prophetic proclamation. This is the climactic purpose of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the fourth gospel, and John has been building toward it since Jesus' baptism in John 1:32–34. Dodd misses this sense of empowering and simply describes John's account of the gift of the Spirit of the Church as "the ultimate climax of the personal relations between Jesus and His disciples."³⁵ Certainly, it is this, but while John speaks of the Spirit's bestowal in terms more intimate and personal than other NT authors, his pastoral language does not reveal a divergent purpose for that bestowal. Barrett concurs and sees the Paraclete as the Spirit of Christian preaching, paralleling the well-known rabbinic description of the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of prophecy."³⁶ Barrett's view, while not diminishing the personhood of the Spirit, explicitly emphasizes his role in sponsoring the work of prophetic proclamation. Boring and Isaacs, in their studies of the various functions of the OT prophet,

³³G. G. Findlay, *The Fellowship in Life Eternal* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909; reprint ed.; Minneapolis: James and Klock, 1977) 117, concurs with this description: "The relationship of advocate and client constituted a settled personal tie involving acquaintanceship, and often kinship, between the parties. The παράκλητος of the old jurisprudence, in the best times of antiquity, was no hired pleader connected with his client for the occasion by his brief and his fee; he was his patron and standing counsel, the head of the order or the clan to which both belonged, bound by the claims of honour and family association to stand by his humble dependent and to see him through when his legal standing was imperilled; he was his client's natural protector and the appointed captain of his salvation."

³⁴For example, M. E. Boring, "The Influence of Christian Prophecy on the Johannine Portrayal of the Paraclete and Jesus," *NTS* 25 (1978) 113–23 and especially M. E. Isaacs, "The Prophetic Spirit in the Fourth Gospel," *HeyJ* 24 (1983) 391–407. See also, H. S. Benjamin, "Pneuma in John and Paul—A Comparative Study of the Term with Particular Reference to the Holy Spirit," *BTB* 6 (1976) 27–48; D. A. Carson, "The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7–11," *JBL* 98 (1979) 547–66; and George Johnston, "The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John," *Perspective* 9 (1968) 29–37 and *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1970).

³⁵Dodd, *Interpretation*, 227.

³⁶Barrett, *The Gospel According to John*, 462.

expand Barrett's insight by showing how all of these prophetic functions are ascribed to the Spirit Paraclete in the fourth gospel.³⁷ These include the functions of being a divine messenger and spokesman, one who glorifies God (Jesus), a teacher and interpreter of events, a witness, one who predicts the future, and one whose message is rejected in the present. "Furthermore, his [the Holy Spirit's] permanent presence within the Christian community is the fulfillment of the hope that all the Lord's people should be prophets (cf. Num 11:29)."³⁸ Although in this age believers are not prophets in the technical sense of the term, surely this was Jesus' encouraging word to the disciples on the night he was betrayed. They would be equipped from above by the long-awaited, abiding presence of the Prophetic Spirit to proclaim as "prophets" the good news of their Savior.

John 20:22

Only this last occurrence of the Holy Spirit in the fourth gospel remains to be dealt with in this study. Again, the context appears to be one of prophetic commissioning:

Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" [John 20:21-22].

Jesus' sending of his disciples as he was sent by the Father and his emphasis on receiving the Holy Spirit suggest a continuation of his Spirit-anointed "prophetic" ministry:

The tandem relationship between Jesus and the spirit-paraclete is used by John to stress the continuity of function rather than to suggest that Jesus is subordinate. Greater claims are made for Jesus than the paraclete, and it is he as the prophet *par excellence* who provides the model for the prophetic spirit. . . . the figure of Moses may also lie behind John's description of Jesus bequeathing his spirit to his disciples (John 20:22; cf. LXX Gen 2:7) Besides endowing the seventy elders with his self-same spirit of prophecy (Num 11:24f), at the end of his farewell discourse he hands on his spirit to his successor, Joshua.³⁹

At various points in the fourth gospel, John has subtly demonstrated that, as the second Moses (Deut 18:15), Jesus is far greater than Moses. For example, while the Torah was given through Moses,

³⁷Boring, "The Influence of Christian Prophecy," 113-20 and Isaacs, "The Prophetic Spirit in the Fourth Gospel," 393-99.

³⁸Isaacs, "The Prophetic Spirit in the Fourth Gospel," 399.

³⁹Ibid., 402-3.

Jesus himself is the New Torah, because he has seen the Father and explains him (John 1:17–18). While manna was given through Moses, Jesus himself is the true manna from heaven (John 6:32–35). “It is because Jesus supersedes Moses that ascriptions such as ‘life,’ ‘light,’ ‘bread,’ and ‘water,’ which were previously applied to the Mosaic Torah, are transferred to him.”⁴⁰

John brings all of this Mosaic imagery to a climax in 20:22. The second and greater prophet Moses—the Eschatological Prophet—is now bequeathing not just the temporary Spirit of prophecy as Moses did, but the abiding, eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit. He will enable all of God’s people to proclaim like prophets of old the good news of the New Moses (cf. Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:1–21). John’s inclusion of this bestowal of the Spirit does not appear to be his official account of Pentecost, but rather it is simply his way of giving finality to the prophetic commissioning he has been picturing since John 7:37–39. In John’s typical style, it is personal, intimate, and filled with OT allusions.

CONCLUSION

Dodd made a lasting contribution to NT studies with his book, *According to the Scriptures*,⁴¹ in which he isolated the most important OT *testimonia* behind numerous NT passages. Dodd’s error in viewing the Holy Spirit’s ministry to the Church in the fourth gospel may lie in the fact that he did not fully integrate his brilliant work about the OT *testimonia* into his study of John. This is crucial because it seems John is always writing at two levels. Some of his first readers appear to have been Hellenized Gentiles who were uninformed of the rich OT foundation underlying the life and ministry of Jesus and the Church. John’s gospel is perfectly intelligible to them without this background. The second group of readers appear to have been Jews and Hellenistic Gentiles who did know the OT well and readily picked up on the twenty-odd OT quotations and the hundred-plus OT allusions in his gospel. Obviously the fourth gospel is immensely enriched with the addition of this dimension.

The person and work of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the same two-fold manner in John. The Holy Spirit can be readily distinguished from the impersonal forces and unholy spirits with which Gentiles would be familiar from the standard Greco-Roman mystery religions. John fosters this distinction by his emphasis on the personhood of the Spirit and the personal relationship the Christian has with him. However, John does not reduce πνεῦμα to reality or absolute being.

⁴⁰Ibid., 403.

⁴¹C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1952).

His rich anchoring in OT *testimonia* about the Spirit makes such an identification impossible. Therefore, John's view of the Holy Spirit can be summarized as a more personal and intimate view of the same prophesied Messianic anointing or empowering found in Luke-Acts and the rest of the NT.⁴² Such an anointing both inaugurates a new Messianic age and empowers those who believe in Jesus to make the "prophetic" proclamation to the nations that he who has been lifted up wants to draw all men to himself (John 12:32).

⁴²See Russell, "The Anointing with the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts," 47-63 for a development of the theme of Messianic anointing in Luke's writings.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: A SURVEY OF CURRENT APPROACHES

CARL B. HOCH, JR.

Three major approaches to the question of the role of women in the church can be discerned in contemporary Western Christianity: the non-evangelical egalitarian, the evangelical egalitarian, and the hierarchical. The first approach does not accept the Bible as the authoritative guide to faith and practice, viewing Scripture as androcentric and thus to be handled with hermeneutical suspicion. The second position accepts the Bible as the infallible standard of faith and ethics, but holds that the texts used by traditionalists to keep women in a limited role of ministry have been misunderstood. Most such texts are considered historically-conditioned ad hoc passages that are not universally applicable to current ecclesiology. The third position affirms that Scripture teaches a hierarchy for the home and the church. Role differentiation, however, is not seen to imply that there is an ontological difference between male and female; the two are essentially equal while maintaining different roles in a functional hierarchy.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

THE role of women in the church is rapidly becoming one of the most controversial issues in western Christianity. Numerous books and articles have appeared on the subject in the last five years, and there is scarcely a major Christian publisher that has not published at least one work on the issue. A recent volume lists approximately 430 titles.¹ This same book cites three bibliographies on the subject.²

¹G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).

²C. E. Cerling, Jr., "An Annotated Bibliography of the New Testament Teaching about Women," *JETS* 16 (1972) 47-53; D. M. Scholer, *Introductory Reading List for*

There are three major approaches to the role of women reflected in the literature: non-evangelical egalitarian, evangelical egalitarian, and hierarchical. This article examines each of these views and suggests areas where further research may resolve the differences or at least bring a sharper focus on the exact nature of the role of women in the church according to each position.

THE NON-EVANGELICAL EGALITARIAN APPROACH

The most concise recent presentation of the non-evangelical egalitarian approach is that edited by Collins.³ This viewpoint rejects the Bible as an absolute, timeless revelation.⁴ The biblical texts are sexist and thoroughly androcentric,⁵ requiring a "hermeneutics of suspicion." The androcentric texts are "theological interpretations, argumentations, projections, and selections rooted in a patriarchal culture."⁶ Therefore, the texts must be read critically and evaluated historically in terms of their own time. However, the theological assessment may take one of five forms according to Osiek.⁷

The rejectionist asserts that the Bible is of no value for constructing a theology of women. The entire Judeo-Christian tradition is hopelessly sinful, corrupt, and unredeemable.⁸

The loyalist maintains that the Bible may be interpreted as really teaching freedom and equality of all persons. Biblical texts teaching female submission are not the norm and must be interpreted in line with the norms of freedom and equality.

The revisionist calls for a total reassessment of the role of women in Judaism and in early Christianity. This approach is a midpoint between the first and second viewpoints.

The sublimationist employs a search for and glorification of the eternal feminine in biblical symbolism. This symbolism establishes the distinctive feminine and masculine modes of being.

The liberationist interprets biblical eschatology in terms of liberation. The task of the church should be the progressive liberation of women from patriarchal domination. The core of the biblical message

the Study of the Role and Status of Women in the New Testament (David Scholer, 1981) 1-4; K. Sorrie, "Contemporary Feminist Theology: A Selective Bibliography," *TSF Bulletin* 7 (1984) 13-15.

³A. Y. Collins, ed., *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1985).

⁴*Ibid.*, 3.

⁵*Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁶*Ibid.*, 56.

⁷C. Osiek, "The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives," in Collins, *Feminist Perspectives*, 97-105.

⁸*Ibid.*, 98.

is to be found in the prophetic tradition which calls for the creation of a just society free from any kind of oppression.⁹

While the non-evangelical egalitarian approach continues to regard the Bible as a religious document, it often does not uphold the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It employs the historical-critical method for adjudicating which texts are acceptable for developing a theology of women and which texts are unacceptable. In the final analysis, contemporary feminism serves as a judge of the Bible; the Bible cannot serve as the judge of contemporary feminism.

THE EVANGELICAL EGALITARIAN APPROACH

This second approach affirms the Bible as the infallible rule of faith and practice. Evangelical egalitarians do not have a hostile or even negative view of the Bible. They do, however, believe that hierarchicalists have misused the texts that seem to support a hierarchy that limits the kinds of ministry women may perform in the church. The Bible does not, according to this approach, teach a man/woman hierarchy nor a submission of women/wives to men/husbands. The true biblical picture, especially from the perspective of the NT, is complete equality between male and female and mutual submission of male and female in Christ. There is a strong emphasis on giving full weight to the cultural conditioning of parts of Scripture and on paying close attention to the historically conditioned *ad hoc* passages.

One of the factors that has certainly caused the first and second approaches to appear so attractive has been the extension of the hierarchical view to politics, economics, business, suffrage, dress, the right to author books, the chairing of meetings, and countless other areas of everyday life. If the hierarchicalist approach demands lower wages for women, denies the right of women to wear slacks and pants-suits, and denounces women who run for political office, then feminists have a legitimate right to reject the hierarchicalist approach as demeaning to women and as a reduction of a woman's status to something less than being made in God's image.

Actually, there is wide agreement between evangelical egalitarians and hierarchicalists in regard to a woman's place in society, home, and church. Both affirm women as made in the image of God. Neither teaches an ontological hierarchy of male and female. Both agree that a woman's role in the home and in the church is to a large degree culturally defined. Both acknowledge the significant contributions women have made in biblical history and in the modern world. Both take note of the place of women in the life of Christ as recorded in

⁹Ibid., 103.

the Gospels and of the high esteem Jesus Christ placed on women. Both insist that there are many clear passages in the NT where women have a significant part in church life: women prayed (Acts 1:14), prophesied (Acts 2:17-18; 21:8-9), engaged in benevolent work (Acts 9:36-43), hosted meetings of the church (Acts 12:12; 16:40; 1 Cor 1:11; 16:19; Col 4:15), were fellow-workers with the apostle Paul (Rom 16:3-5; Phil 4:2-4), worked hard in the Lord (Rom 16:2, 12), taught younger women (Titus 2:3-5), washed the feet of saints (1 Tim 5:9-10), and at least in one case corrected a male's deficient theology privately (Acts 18:26).

Both emphasize the giving of spiritual gifts to every member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:7). No one denies that women sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph 5:19) or evangelized (John 4:39-42). Therefore, most agree that 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-12 cannot command the absolute silence of women in the church.

The conflict between egalitarians and hierarchicalists revolves around six or seven controversial passages in the NT and the extent of male/female equality. Feminists argue that there is to be a complete equality of men and women in all spheres of life. There are no leaders or heads. There are neither offices from which women are excluded nor limitations of ministry to be placed upon women. All ministries in the church are open to women and mutual submission is to characterize male/female relationships in the home and in the church. Evangelical egalitarians have maintained this position based on their interpretation of texts that have been bastions for hierarchicalists who maintain an ontological equality but a functional hierarchy between men and women and an exclusion of women from the office of teaching and/or ruling elder.

The first debated text is Rom 16:1. Egalitarians assert that Phoebe was a deaconess in the church at Cenchreae. The service she performed was official and reflects the male/female equality in the apostolic church.

The second debated text is Rom 16:7. Egalitarians argue that Ἰουνιᾶν is a feminine form and refers to a woman named Junia. She is not only called a fellow-prisoner (συναιχμαλώτος) with Paul, but more significantly, she is designated as outstanding among the apostles. It is said that there can be no doubt from this text that there were woman apostles in the early church.

The third controversial passage is 1 Cor 11:2-16. Since some kind of head-covering is mentioned, egalitarians are quick to point out the need to take seriously the cultural dimensions of various NT directives. But more attention is directed toward the meaning of κεφαλή in v 3. Egalitarians insist that this word means "source" or "origin," and that attempts to establish a hierarchy on the basis of this verse are misguided.

The fourth debated passage is 1 Cor 14:34–35. All sides admit the difficulty in understanding just what the problem was at Corinth and what the Pauline response to the problem was. The exegetical difficulties are: (1) Does the phrase “as in all the churches of the saints” go with v 33 or with v 34? (2) Does αἱ γυναῖκες mean “your women” or “your wives”? (3) Is the prohibition against speaking a prohibition against speaking in tongues, speaking across a divided aisle, speaking or praying as a prophetess (if this option is adopted, 11:5 is usually interpreted as allowing praying or prophesying only for the sake of argument, but not in fact allowing either practice), brash speaking, teaching, or all speaking? (4) Where is the passage “in the law”? (5) Why is it shameful for a woman to speak in the church? The solutions here are not uniform. Some argue for a textual interpolation; others for an admonition against judging prophets publicly; others for a Gnostic background of female chauvinism; and others for a quotation by Paul of a legalistic slogan being used by Jewish propagandists to promote male chauvinism in the Corinthian assembly. Although the verses are obscure, they are, according to the egalitarians, to be recognized as an *ad hoc* passage. The exegete must use considerable care before raising a text above time-bound significance to timeless significance.

The fifth controversial text is Gal 3:28. All egalitarians regard this verse as the “Magna Carta” of feminism. Along with Acts 2:17–18 it can be considered as an inaugural text. Gal 3:28 is considered to be *the normative text*. All other texts must be interpreted so as to cohere with this text. Egalitarian exegetes stoutly maintain that this verse teaches the complete equality of men and women in the church. According to Bilezikian, “sex distinctions are irrelevant in the church. Therefore, the practice of sex discrimination in the church is sinful.”¹⁰

The sixth debated passage is 1 Tim 2:11–15. There are few passages in the NT that have produced as much controversy. All approaches regard it as a *crux interpretum*. It is a pillar passage for hierarchicalists. It is a problem passage for egalitarians. It has been dubbed non-Pauline by those rejecting the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. Some feel that it represents “Paul in process” where he has not yet worked out consistently the implications of his basic theology as expressed in Gal 3:28. Gordon Fee has recently argued that this is an *ad hoc* passage addressing a particular problem in the church at Ephesus.¹¹ The passage, then, is of particular, not universal significance.¹²

¹⁰Bilezikian, *Sex Roles*, 128.

¹¹G. Fee, “Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, With Further Reflection on the Hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents,” *JETS* 28 (1985) 141–51.

¹²G. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Good News Commentary; San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984) 141–51.

The seventh debated text is 1 Tim 3:11. The Greek text simply reads γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως after the three verses (vv 8–10) that outline the qualifications for deacons. The exegetical question is whether deaconesses or the wives of deacons are in view. While some hierarchicalists concede that deaconesses may be the subject, the usual approach is to interpret the γυναῖκας as the wives of deacons. Neither this passage nor Rom 16:1 describes women as holding the office of deaconess according to many hierarchicalists. Phoebe is a “servant” and the γυναῖκας assist their husbands in their roles as deacons. Egalitarians, on the other hand, use this text to support their exegesis of Rom 16:1, or they use Rom 16:1 as support for a deaconess as the subject of 1 Tim 3:11.

According to evangelical egalitarians, then, none of these seven controversial texts undermines or subverts a doctrine of complete equality of men and women in the church: Gal 3:28 is the basic, inaugural text; 1 Corinthians 11 does not teach a hierarchy; Rom 16:1, 7 and 1 Tim 3:11 show that women held high offices in the primitive church (deaconess and apostle); and 1 Cor 14:34–35 and 1 Tim 2:11–15 are *ad hoc* passages addressing particular problems in the churches of Corinth and Ephesus, and are not universal, timeless texts.

THE HIERARCHICALIST APPROACH

Hierarchicalists reaffirm the position of traditional Judaism and Christianity that God has determined a functional hierarchy in the home and in the church. There is a role differentiation between male and female. Males are to lead and females are to follow in church government. Only men are eligible for the office of teaching and ruling elder. In the home, although husbands are to love their wives, wives are to submit themselves to their husbands (Eph 5:22, 24; Col 3:18). Oppressive husbands and autocratic males in leadership roles are reprehensible, but this does not invalidate the biblical directives.

Hierarchicalists differ over whether Rom 16:1 and 1 Tim 3:11 are describing deaconesses. Although the majority of them support the servant/wives of deacons interpretation, such an interpretation is not necessary to their approach. Hierarchicalists do not argue that women have no ministry in the church. The office of deaconess may have been a legitimate ministry in NT times. There is no pronoun after γυναῖκας, and Paul does not have a separate section on the wives of overseers after his discussion of the overseers themselves in vv 1–7. These facts argue against a separate section on wives of deacons. When Paul uses ὡσαύτως, it usually introduces a separate group (cf. 1 Tim 2:9; 3:8, 11; Titus 2:3, 6). The NT apparently did not have a

separate word for "deaconess."¹³ Therefore, the office of deaconess is exegetically possible. The hierarchical approach is not adversely affected if women serve as deaconesses in the church.

However, hierarchicalists refuse to acknowledge that Ἰουνῖαν is a feminine name. The possibility from a purely lexical point of view that this is a woman's name is probably ruled out by the context.¹⁴ The form is probably a short form of the common Junianus.¹⁵

Even if Ἰουνῖαν is a woman's name and she is outstanding, she may not actually have been an apostle. The Greek preposition ἐν is fluid enough to allow a person to be among a group without being an integral part of that group.

A pillar in the egalitarian position is the meaning of κεφαλὴ in 1 Cor 11:3-5 as "source" or "origin." The Mickelsens assert that no superior rank or authority connotations can be read into κεφαλὴ.¹⁶ Grudem, however, states that κεφαλὴ never means "source" or "origin" in Greek literature.¹⁷ Two possible examples of this meaning (Herodotus 4.91 and the *Orphic Fragments* 21a), upon closer examination, yield the meanings "top" and "beginning of a series."¹⁸ Grudem's conclusion is: "If we are interested in biblical interpretation that is based on the facts of historical and linguistic research, then it would seem wise to give up once for all the claim that *kephale* can mean 'source.'"¹⁹ Hierarchicalists, therefore, affirm their belief that the NT teaches an authority structure where the man does have a priority in leadership in the church and in the home over the woman.

Hierarchicalists are as perplexed over Paul's intention in 1 Cor 14:34-35 as the egalitarians are. The usual approach is to compare the vocabulary parallels with 1 Timothy 2 and to conclude that authoritative speaking, teaching, and ruling are forbidden.²⁰ An alternative view is that women are forbidden to participate in the (public) examination of prophets.²¹ Since the passage is obscure, nothing

¹³J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953; reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 83-84.

¹⁴BAGD, s.v. "Ἰουνῖας," II. Cf. Hans Lietzmann, *Die Briefe des Apostels Paulus* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen: Mohr, 1910) n.p.

¹⁵BAGD, s.v. "Ἰουνῖας," II.

¹⁶Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, "What Does *Kephale* Mean in the New Testament?" in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1986) 97-110.

¹⁷W. Grudem, "Appendix One: Does *Kephale* ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples," in G. W. Knight III, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Chicago: Moody, 1985) 68.

¹⁸Ibid., 53.

¹⁹Ibid., 70.

²⁰Ibid., 34.

²¹J. B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 193.

dogmatic can be based on it. But it is looked upon as cohering with 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2 in terms of female subordination in the church.

Hierarchicalists firmly reject the thesis that Gal 3:28 teaches complete functional equality between Jews and Gentiles, slaves and masters, or male and female. They believe that Paul is affirming soteriological equality. The whole argument of Galatians is whether works of the law such as circumcision are necessary in order for Gentiles to be saved. The issue in Galatians is soteriological. The argument is over entrance into the church, not ministry within it. It is no more legitimate to use Gal 3:28 to teach absolute equality of all the race in Christ than it is to use Col 1:20 to teach universalism. Authority structures and functional differences are simply not in view in Gal 3:28.

The pillar passage for the hierarchical view is 1 Tim 2:11–15 just as Gal 3:28 and 1 Cor 11:3–5 are pillar passages for egalitarians. 1 Tim 2:11–15 is not an interpolation. It occurs within a genuine epistle of Paul. It is absolute, universal, and timeless in its prescriptive character as the Word of God. Although there may be a necessary cultural adjustment over precisely how a woman might exercise authority over a man, a woman is to be in submission to a man in the church. The woman is forbidden to indoctrinate the church in matters of faith and practice. This passage must be interpreted in light of other NT texts where verbal activity of women in the church is described and approved. Therefore, the word ἡσυχία cannot mean total silence. It either means silence in respect to authoritative teaching or an attitude of reverence and respect (see 2 Thess 3:12; and cf. ἡσύχιος in 1 Tim 2:2 and 1 Pet 3:4). The term αὐθεντέω simply means “exercise authority over.”²² It is not assuming rebellious women who are seeking to dominate. Paul grounds his argument in the first three chapters of Genesis, not in Jewish or Graeco-Roman cultural practices.²³ The parallels between this passage and 1 Pet 3:1–7 indicate that this passage cannot be *ad hoc*. Therefore, 1 Tim 2:11–15 places a limitation upon women: they are not eligible for the office of teaching and/or ruling elder. Their eligibility would violate the hierarchy and transgress the prohibitions against authoritative teaching.

CONCLUSION

While there are points of agreement among the three approaches to the role of women in the church, there are also sharp disagreements. At stake is the ministry of women in the church. Every effort,

²²G. W. Knight III, “*AUTHENTEO* in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *NTS* 30 (1984) 143–57.

²³Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 204–23.

therefore, should be expended by those within the church to grapple with the issues in an attempt to reach a position that neither vitiates the authority of Scripture nor robs women of a vital, biblical place in the body of Christ. In this effort, the following questions need to be addressed:

1. If Grudem is correct in his study of κεφαλή, what revisions will need to be made in the egalitarian approach? If he is wrong, will the hierarchicalist position need radical reassessment?
2. Is Ἰουλίαν a masculine or feminine name? If it can be proven that she held the position of apostle in the early church, what are the implications of this fact for current church order? Are there apostles today?
3. What does it mean "to prophesy"? Is this a continuing ministry of women or should it be classified with temporary gifts and thus eliminate that ministry for women in the modern church?
4. Do women lose a significant part of ministry in the modern church where they no longer serve as hostesses for the gathering of the saints?
5. If a woman can legitimately serve as a deaconess, just what ministry can she have or not have? Did NT deacons only "serve tables"?
6. Can the hierarchy be separated from the hair-covering in 1 Corinthians 11? In other words, what are the hermeneutics of NT directives given in a cultural form? Are hierarchicalists consistent in insisting on one directive as absolute and the other directive as relative?
7. To what extent is there a cultural limitation on Scripture? Hermeneutically, what guidelines are there to distinguish the prescriptive Word of God from the descriptive Word of God?
8. If 1 Tim 2:11–15 is an *ad hoc* passage, what are the limits to declaring most of the NT *ad hoc*? Is there any authoritative "rule of faith and practice"?
9. What answers does one give to questions concerning the application of 1 Tim 2:11–15 in the modern church if the hierarchical approach is adopted? Is a new "Evangelical Talmud" necessary to give "Halakot" concerning where and when a woman can or cannot "teach"?
10. What spiritual gifts are the unique province of men?
11. What contributions can a woman make to theology, guidance, supervision, and organization in the church?

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A COMPUTER-AIDED TEXTUAL COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

JAMES D. PRICE

A genealogical tree diagram of the textual history of Philippians may be constructed on the basis of a computer program used to analyze the variant readings. The resultant diagram suggests the development of four ancient text-types for Philippians and an early but gradual degradation of the text. Comparing the probabilities of the readings—based on the analysis of Philippians generated by the program—with the choices of the editors of UBSGNT³ reveals that seven of the readings in UBSGNT³ may not be correct. Although the results are tentative and more research on genealogical theory is needed, the performance of the program seems to justify further work in the field of computer-aided textual criticism.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

AN experimental computer program was recently developed that attempts to discover genealogical relationships among manuscripts, to construct a theoretical tree diagram of an approximate genealogical history of the text, and to identify the most likely readings of the original text based upon this reconstruction.¹ The program attempts to provide textual scholars with an objective method for evaluating external genealogical probabilities. The method requires less subjectivity on the part of the scholar and may eventually provide greater confidence in the final results. The program has been used on a select set of variants from Philippians; this article is a report of the results.

The results reported are tentative; no claim is made that they represent final conclusions. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the potential of computer aids for textual criticism and to

¹The program is described in an article by this writer, "A Computer Aid for Textual Criticism," *GTJ* 8 (1987) 115-30.

suggest possible ways to interpret the results. The genealogical theory upon which the program is based is still under development. Use of the program will bring about refinements in the theory and its implementation.

TEXTUAL APPARATUS

Ideally the best body of textual data would be a large number of manuscript witnesses distributed throughout the history of the text, a full list of significant alternate readings, together with a list of the manuscripts supporting these readings—that is, a complete textual apparatus. However, for purposes of testing the program, a complete apparatus was not deemed necessary. A choice then had to be made between the apparatus in the Nestle-Aland twenty-sixth edition and that in the UBSGNT³. The Nestle-Aland apparatus lists a greater number of variation units (about seventy for Philippians), but the number of manuscript witnesses is limited and incomplete. The UBS apparatus lists a limited number of significant variation units (sixteen for Philippians), but a larger number of manuscript witnesses (seventy-three for Philippians) with a complete list of manuscripts supporting each reading.

Experiment reveals that, with this kind of trade-off, the greater number of manuscript witnesses is more important for tracing genealogical descent than the number of variation units, especially when the variation units are significant.² Therefore, the UBS apparatus was selected for use, with all its limitations. No additional textual research was conducted to supplement the data. Initially, the textual apparatus of UBSGNT² was used to provide the data for this study; but the final results were collated with and corrected by UBSGNT³ so that they are consistent with that text.

Table 1 lists the alternate readings of Philippians treated in UBSGNT². Throughout this article, readings are referred to by a decimal number such as 5.3. The number to the left of the decimal

²Theoretically it is not the number of variation units that is significant, but the number of alternate readings (56 for the UBSGNT text of Philippians). The number of alternate readings limits the maximum number of possible nodes in the genealogical tree. The number of manuscript witnesses in the textual apparatus limits the maximum number of possible branches in the tree. Ideally, the two numbers should be balanced. If there is a large number of alternate readings, the complexity of the tree is limited by the number of manuscripts. If there is a large number of manuscripts, the complexity is limited by the number of alternate readings. Initial experiments with Romans have verified these observations. The UBSGNT apparatus for Romans has 91 variation units (327 alternate readings), and 64 manuscripts. Yet the complexity of the genealogical tree was approximately the same as the one for Philippians, except that each node had more variants in it. It is expected that an expanded apparatus will add complexity to the tree, but not significantly alter its basic structure.

refers to the variation unit, and the number to the right refers to the particular alternative in that unit. So the designation 5.3 refers to variation unit 5, alternate reading 3 (τοῦτο οὖν as listed in Table 1). The computer program works with these numerical indexes rather than with the linguistic data itself.

Alternate readings listed in UBSGNT³ that are supported only by seriously deficient witnesses are not included in Table 1; these readings contribute nothing of value to the reconstruction of genealogical history because they are incapable of exhibiting grouping patterns. The data of Table 1 differ from UBSGNT³ only at variation unit 13. UBSGNT³ rightly rejects reading 13.1 as original and omits the reading altogether in its list; therefore 13.2 on Table 1 corresponds with 13.1 in UBSGNT³, and so forth.

MANUSCRIPT WITNESSES

Table 2 lists the manuscript witnesses used in the study. The first column lists the manuscript designation as used in UBSGNT³. The set of sixteen columns lists the alternate readings contained in each manuscript. Column 1 is for variation unit 1; column 16 is for variation unit 16. The number in each column specifies the alternate reading number for the associated variation unit. Thus manuscript κ^* has alternate readings 1.1, 2.3, 3.2, etc. A zero designates a missing reading.³ The last column lists the approximate date of the manuscripts. Seriously deficient witnesses were not included in the data.

Certain assumptions were made in assembling the manuscript data. In regard to corrected manuscripts, it was assumed that corrections were made from an exemplar other than the parent exemplar of the original hand and that the corrector exemplar agreed with the original hand except where corrections were made. Thus, for example, D^* and D^c were treated as two separate manuscripts; the readings of B^3 were assumed to agree with B^* unless otherwise noted in UBSGNT³.⁴

The quotations of a church father were assumed to have been taken from a single manuscript. Where multiple readings by a church father were recorded in the same place of variation, it was assumed that more than one manuscript was involved. In this case, the set of readings that best matched a known grouping pattern was assumed to

³A reading could be missing due to a hiatus in the manuscript or to the failure of UBSGNT to cite it. Fascicles of manuscripts were not checked in these cases.

⁴It is recognized that this assumption may be inaccurate in some cases. However, the UBSGNT apparatus makes no distinction between possible corrector scribes or corrector exemplars for a given siglum. Research beyond the scope of the present project is required to resolve this uncertainty. The results suggest that the uncertainty is minimal for this present set of data.

TABLE 1

Alternate Readings of Philippians

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Variation Unit</i>	<i>Reading Number</i>	<i>Alternate Reading</i>
1:11	1	1	καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ
	1	2	καὶ ἔπαινον χριστοῦ
	1	3	καὶ ἔπαινόν μοι
	1	4	θεοῦ καὶ ἔπαινον ἑμοί
	1	5	καὶ ἔπαινον αὐτοῦ
1:14	2	1	λόγον λαλεῖν
	2	2	λόγον κυρίου λαλεῖν
	2	3	λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖν
	2	4	λόγον λαλεῖν τοῦ θεοῦ
2:2	3	1	ἐν
	3	2	αὐτό
2:4	4	1	ἕκαστοι
	4	2	ἕκαστος
	4	3	omit
2:5	5	1	τοῦτο
	5	2	τοῦτο γάρ
	5	3	τοῦτο οὖν
	5	4	καὶ τοῦτο
2:12	6	1	ὥς
	6	2	omit
2:26	7	1	ὑμᾶς
	7	2	ὑμᾶς ἰδεῖν
	7	3	πρὸς ὑμᾶς (after gap)
2:30	8	1	χριστοῦ
	8	2	τοῦ χριστοῦ
	8	3	(1) or (2)
	8	4	κυρίου
	8	5	τοῦ θεοῦ
	8	6	omit
3:3	9	1	θεοῦ
	9	2	θεῶ
	9	3	omit
3:12	10	1	ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι
	10	2	ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι
	10	3	ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι ἢ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι
3:13	11	1	οὐ
	11	2	οὐπω
3:16	12	1	τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν
	12	2	τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν
	12	3	τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν
	12	4	τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, τῷ αὐτῷ κανόνι στοιχεῖν
	12	5	τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν κανόνι, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν
3:21	13	1	αὐτῷ
	13	2	αὐτῷ
	13	3	αὐτῷ
	13	4	ἑαυτῷ

TABLE 1 (*cont.*)

Reference	Variation Unit	Reading Number	Alternate Reading
4:3	14	1	τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου
	14	2	τῶν συνεργῶν μου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν
4:16	15	1	εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι
	15	2	εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μου
	15	3	τὴν χρεῖαν μοι
	15	4	τὴν χρεῖαν μου
	15	5	μοι εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μου
	15	6	in unum mihi
	15	7	in necessitatem meam vel usibus meis
4:23	16	1	ὁμῶν.
	16	2	ὁμῶν. ἀμήν

TABLE 2

List of Variants by Manuscript

Manuscript Name	Variation Unit																Date
κ*	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	350
κ ^c	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	4	2	1	2	5	4	1	1	2	250?
A	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	450
B*	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	350
B ³	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	300?
C	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	450
D*	2	4	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	4	2	550
D ^c	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	4	4	1	2	2	450?
G*	3	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	850
G ^c	3	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	800?
I	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	450
K	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	3	1	1	2	850
P	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	4	2	1	2	5	2	1	2	2	850
Ψ	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	5	4	1	1	2	800
p ⁴⁶	4	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	2	1	1	0	1	3	2	200
33	1	3	2	1	1	2	2	4	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	2	950
81	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	1	1	3	2	1044
88	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	5	3	1	1	2	1150
104	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	4	1	3	2	1087
181	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	4	1	1	2	550
326	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	5	4	1	3	2	1150
330	1	3	1	2	3	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	3	1	3	2	1150
436	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	4	1	3	2	1050
451	1	3	1	2	3	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	3	1	3	2	1050
614	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	5	3	1	2	2	1250
629	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	3	1	2	2	1350
630	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	4	1	2	2	1350

TABLE 2 (*cont.*)

<i>Manuscript Name</i>	<i>Variation Unit</i>																<i>Date</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
1241	1	3	2	1	1	2	2	4	1	1	2	4	4	1	3	2	1150
1739	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	950
1877	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	5	3	1	1	2	1350
1881	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1350
1962	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	4	2	1	2	5	3	1	2	2	1050
1984	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	5	3	1	2	2	2	1350
1985	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	5	1	1	2	5	3	1	2	2	1561
2127	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	4	2	1	2	4	3	1	1	2	1150
2492	1	3	1	2	3	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	3	1	3	2	1250
2495	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	5	3	1	1	2	1400
Byz-A	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	3	1	1	2	(600)
Byz-B	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	4	1	1	2	(600)
Lectionaries	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	1	1	2	(1100)
vg	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	400
it ^{ar}	4	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	2	2	3	4	1	2	2	850
it ^c	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	1200
it ^d	1	4	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	1	1	2	450
it ^{dem}	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	1250
it ^{div*}	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	1250
it ^{div-c}	1	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	1250?
it ^e	1	4	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	1	1	2	850
it ^f	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	2	1	4	4	1	1	1	850
it ^g	3	2	1	3	2	1	1	3	1	2	1	3	3	1	7	1	850
it ^m	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	500
it ^x	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	850
it ^{z*}	5	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	6	2	750
it ^{zc}	5	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	2	650?
syr ^p	1	3	1	2	4	2	2	3	2	1	1	5	3	1	5	2	500
syr ^h	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	4	2	1	1	5	3	1	3	2	500
cop ^{sa}	1	3	0	3	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	5	1	400
cop ^{bo}	1	3	0	2	1	2	2	4	1	1	2	1	3	1	5	2	400
arm	1	3	1	2	1	2	2	4	2	1	1	4	4	1	4	2	400
goth	0	3	2	2	2	0	1	3	2	1	2	4	0	1	3	0	350
eth ^{ro}	0	3	1	3	1	2	2	4	2	0	2	1	0	0	3	2	550
eth ^{pp}	0	3	1	3	1	2	2	4	2	0	2	5	0	0	3	2	550
Ambrosiaster	3	3	1	3	2	2	1	3	2	2	2	3	0	0	4	1	350
Augustine	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	430
Chrysostom	0	$\frac{1}{3}$	0	2	2	2	1	2	2	0	$\frac{1}{2}$	5	$\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	1	400
Clement	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	200
Eusebius	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	339
Euthalius	0	3	2	1	1	0	2	4	1	0	2	4	3	0	0	1	335
Hilary	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	350
John-Dam.	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	2	1	0	2	5	4	0	0	2	750
Origen	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	250
Theodoret	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	2	$\frac{1}{2}$	0	2	5	4	0	0	2	450
Victor-Rome	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	3	2	1	1	3	3	0	0	1	362

belong to one manuscript of the church father, and the remaining readings were assigned to another manuscript of the father.

Each of the various manuscripts of ancient versions was assumed to be a faithful translation of a single Greek manuscript. Obvious translational blunders were attributed to the versions themselves, as well as known linguistic inadequacies such as Latinisms, etc. Some sigla of the versions in the UBSGNT (such as the Vulgate) represent the composite readings of a group of many genealogically related manuscripts; these too were assumed to represent the readings of the exemplar from which the translation was rendered. This assumption is not a serious flaw in the methodology. If adequate representative manuscripts of a given version were available in the textual apparatus, the computer program would group these manuscripts together and identify their composite readings as those of the parent exemplar, and then create an exemplar to represent the composite witness of the given group of manuscripts. So nothing is lost except details of the textual transmission of the version itself, a matter of secondary interest.

The composite witness of the Byzantine tradition was represented as two manuscripts (Byz-A and Byz-B) in agreement except for variation unit 13 where part of the Byzantine tradition (Byz-A) reads 13.3 and the other part of the Byzantine tradition (Byz-B) reads 13.4. As with the discussion of versions above, this assumption is not detrimental to the reconstruction of the genealogical history, because the computer program regularly lets an exemplar represent the witness of all its descendants. If more representatives of the Byzantine tradition had been available in the UBSGNT apparatus, they would have formed additional branches under either Byz-A or Byz-B as manuscripts 1739 and 1881 did, or at least closely related branches as manuscripts 630 and 2495 did.

The composite witness of the lectionary tradition also is represented as one manuscript (Lect), except in those cases where individual lectionary manuscripts were included in the apparatus. The above reasoning also applies to this case.

The date of each manuscript witness was taken from that supplied in the front matter of the UBSGNT text. In some cases no date was given, so dates were assigned. In the case of correctors, it was assumed that the corrector scribe used a manuscript regarded as more authoritative than the manuscript he was correcting; therefore, a date fifty years earlier than the date of the corrected manuscript was arbitrarily assigned to the corrector manuscript. Therefore, the date represents that of the corrector manuscript, not of the scribal activity; the date of the manuscript is the important detail, not the date of the scribe.

The results indicate that this assumption was reasonable. The corrector manuscripts generally appear on the resultant tree diagram earlier than the corresponding corrected manuscripts. The initially assigned dates do not determine that result; the genealogical grouping of the manuscripts is the primary determination.

GENEALOGICAL TREE DIAGRAM

On the basis of the manuscript alignments in the sixteen places of variation noted in UBSGNT², the computer program defined a preliminary genealogical tree diagram. This diagram was manually reworked and revised to produce an optimum configuration defining the genealogical relationships among the seventy-three manuscripts listed in the apparatus. Figure 1 is the resultant tree diagram.⁵ Greek manuscripts are represented by circles, church fathers by squares, and ancient versions by triangles. Each manuscript, father, or version is identified by name, designation, or number. Exemplars that were created by the computer program have been assigned names that identify their role in the reconstructed history (i.e., Alex-A, Alex-B, and so on). Solid arrows mark direct genealogical descent; that is, an exemplar is connected with its immediate (first-generation) descendants by means of a solid arrow. A descendant manuscript shares all the variants of its ancestors. A dotted arrow marks partial descent or correction.

In subsequent figures, the tree diagrams define how the text degraded. Each manuscript is named and dated. Random alternate readings introduced by a given manuscript are listed inside the associated circle, square, or triangle; these are the readings in which the manuscript differs from its parent exemplar. Such readings are transmitted to subsequent descendants. Some alternate readings introduced by a manuscript have been regarded as corrections; these are indicated by dotted arrows with the correcting reading number listed alongside the arrow, or by an incomplete arrow originating from a dangling reading number if the source of the correction is uncertain. A given manuscript contains the alternate readings listed in its own circle, square, or triangle, plus all the readings in the circles, squares, or triangles of all its ancestors; all readings not so defined for a given manuscript are the readings of the original autograph as reconstructed by the computer program. A correction that restores what is deemed to be an original reading is marked with an asterisk, such as 13.2*.

⁵The diagram is more complex than the simplified version in my earlier article, "A Computer Aid for Textual Criticism," 122. Optimizing the configuration resulted in a few changes in the final form.

Figure 1 defines the genealogical history of the text of Philippians as reconstructed by the computer program. The ancestry of each extant witness used in the study is traced back through preceding generations to the reconstructed original autograph. The next section interprets the tree diagram in terms of genealogical history.

TEXTUAL HISTORY

The structure of the genealogical tree diagram defines an approximate history of the text of Philippians (figure 1).⁶ The following material is a historical interpretation of the genealogical tree diagram produced by the computer program. It illustrates the potential value of the computer-aided genealogical method, but the interpretation is limited by the uncertainties inherent in the method itself and the limited number of variation units in the available data. These limitations should be understood in the following discussion without constant repetition. The use of the indicative mood does not imply certainty, but simply reflects the suggestions derived from the computer program within the above limitations.

According to the genealogical tree diagram, four ancient text-types developed: the Alexandrian, the Antiochan, the Caesarean,⁷ and the Western (figure 2).⁸ In each text-type there is evidence of very early degradation and mixture followed by some degree of correction and stabilization.

The Alexandrian Text-Type

The Alexandrian text-type (figure 3) is witnessed by manuscripts \aleph^* , \aleph^c , A, B*, B³, C, D*, G*, G^c, I, P, p⁴⁶, 33, 81, 104, 330, 451, 1241, 1962, 2127, and 2492; by the texts of the church fathers Augustine, Clement, Eusebius, Euthalius, Hilary, and Origen (all incomplete); and by the Ethiopic versions eth^{ro} and eth^{pp}, by the Coptic versions cop^{bo} and cop^{sa}, and by the Latin version it^g.

⁶Obviously the exact history of the text cannot be reconstructed. The configuration of the diagram is derived from the data of the 73 manuscripts and the 16 variation units used in the study. These data are sufficient to give an approximate reconstruction of the history.

⁷The name "Caesarean" is used with caution since no Caesarean text-type has been previously identified for the Pauline epistles. However, preliminary computer research with 1 Timothy, Jude, and Romans confirms a similar text-type involving the Armenian version for each book. This suggests the possible identity of the text-type as Caesarean.

⁸Figure 2 represents only the first few generations of the textual history. For simplification, the later generations have been omitted in order to more clearly illustrate the reconstructed history. Subsequent figures include the complete details for the individual text-types.

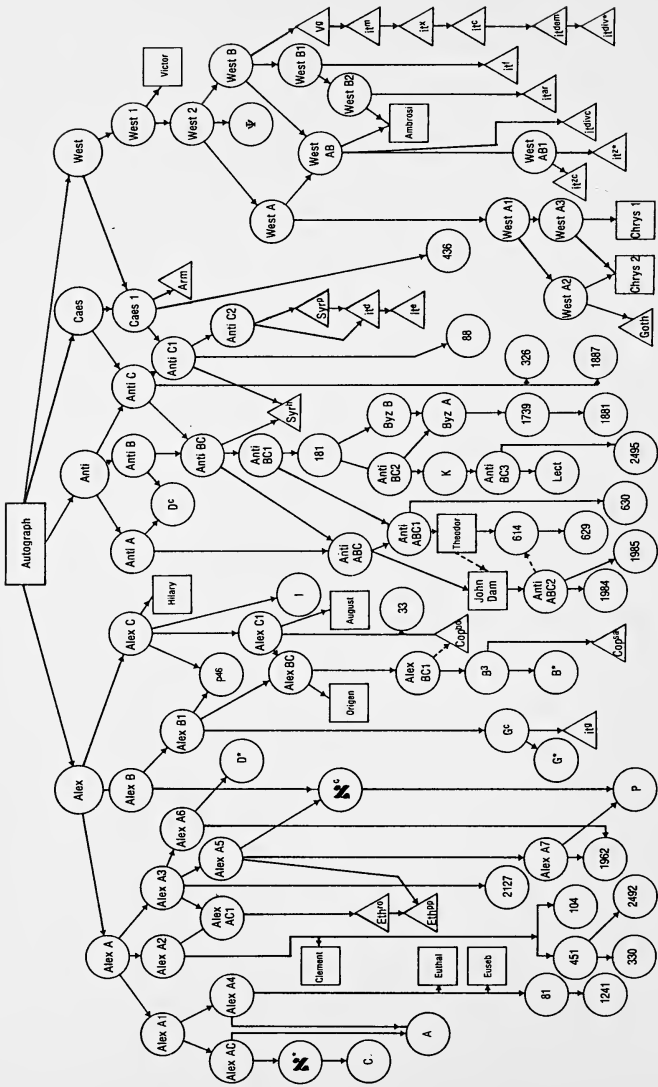


FIGURE 1. Genealogical Tree Diagram for the Book of Philipians

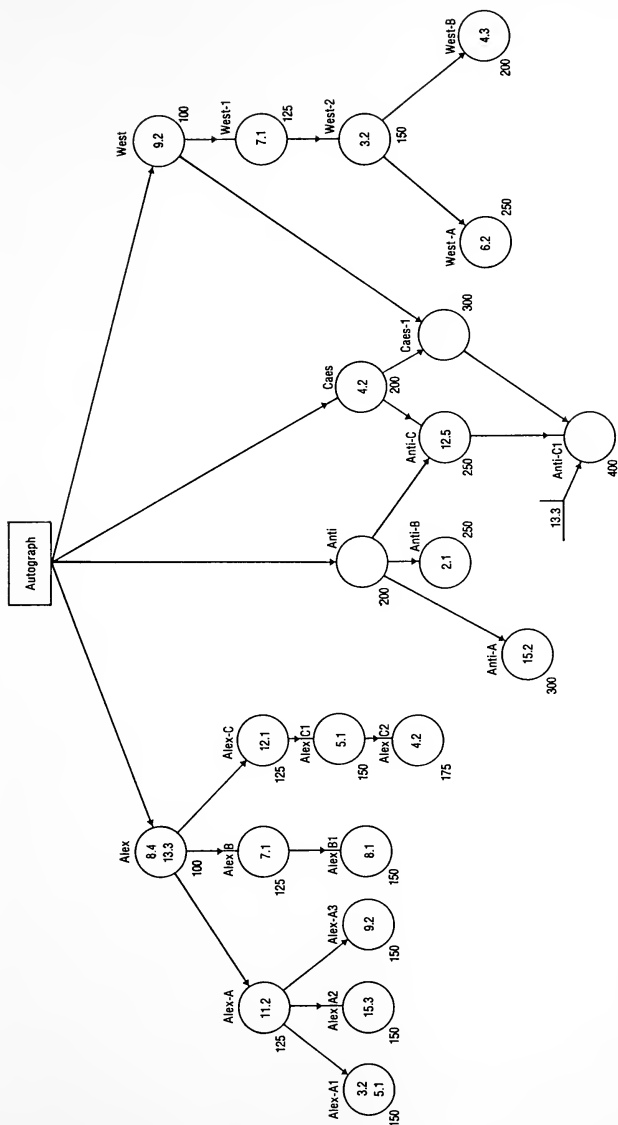


FIGURE 2. Genealogical Tree Diagram of The Early Generations of the Book of Philippians

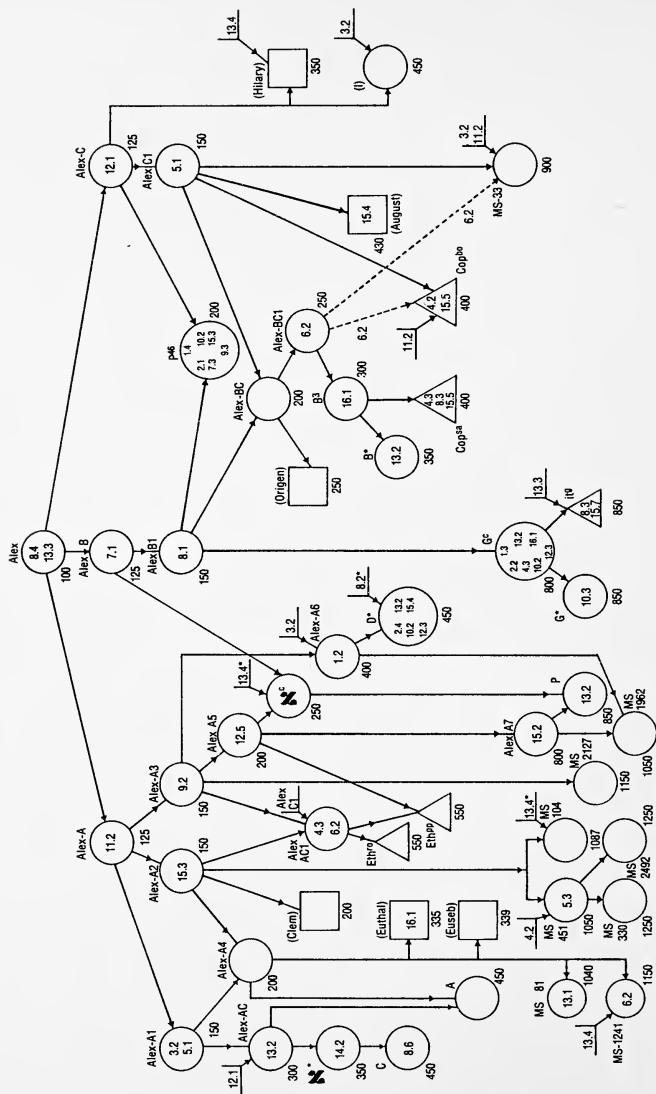


FIGURE 3. Genealogical Tree Diagram of the Alexandrian Text-type of the Book of Philipians

The proto-Alexandrian text introduced variants 8.4 and 13.3, and seems to have been in Egypt by the end of the first century.⁹ About the first quarter of the second century three new variants had been introduced independently (11.2, 7.1, 12.1) starting three main branches of the Alexandrian text-type: Alex-A (11.2), Alex-B (7.1), and Alex-C (12.1).

In the Alex-A branch, about the middle of the second century, three sub-branches originated introducing four independent alternate readings: Alex-A1 (3.2, 5.1), Alex-A2 (15.3) and Alex-A3 (9.2). Sub-branch Alex-A1 has one unique descendant, Alex-AC that accounts for manuscripts \aleph^* , C, and A.¹⁰ Sub-branch Alex-A2 is witnessed by Clement (incomplete) and by manuscripts 104, 330, 451, and 2492. Sub-branch Alex-A3 is witnessed by manuscripts 1962, 2127, and D*. Manuscript D* seems to have been a careless recension made to accompany the independent Old Latin version, it^d, made from a Greek text of Antiochan descent (discussed later). A mixture of Alex-A2, Alex-A3, and Alex-C1 (with two new variants) seems to be the primary source of a recension (Alex-AC1) made to accommodate both Ethiopic versions, eth^{ro} and eth^{pp}. A few minor branches independently introduce later variants: Alex-A5 (12.5), Alex-A6 (1.2), and Alex-A7 (15.2).

The Alex-B branch has no unique descendants, but a mixture of Alex-B and Alex-A5 accounts for manuscripts \aleph^c and P (plus Alex-A8). About the end of the second quarter of the second century a new branch (Alex-B1) originated introducing variant 8.1; this text is witnessed by manuscripts G^c, G*, and the Old Latin version it^g. Manuscript G^c appears to be a careless recension made to accommodate the independent Latin version it^g made from it.

The Alex-C branch is witnessed by manuscript I (incomplete), and by the texts of Augustine and Hilary (both incomplete). By the end of the second quarter of the second century a new branch (Alex-C1) originated, introducing variant 5.1;¹¹ this text is witnessed by manuscript 33 (with some corrections). Papyrus p⁴⁶ appears to be a mixture of Alex-C and Alex-B1, but its numerous random variants suggest that the scribe was careless.

⁹Dating of the early generations is only approximate, being based on the arbitrary rule of making a created exemplar fifty years older than its oldest descendant. Since Clement (c. 200) and p⁴⁶ (c. 200) are both identified by the program as third-generation descendants, a date of A.D. 100 for the proto-Alexandrian text-type is not unreasonable.

¹⁰Manuscript C is not complete, having only 7 of the 16 readings, so its exact location in the diagram is uncertain; this is true of all seriously incomplete witnesses. Manuscript A exhibits mixture with branch Alex-A4.

¹¹Variant 5.1 was also introduced at Alex-A1 at about the same time. There seems to have been some mixture of Alex-C with Alex-AC, and of Alex-C1 with Alex-A1.

A mixture of branches Alex-B1 and Alex-C1 occurred about the third quarter of the second century, producing branch Alex-BC. This mixed branch is witnessed by the text of Origen (incomplete). About the middle of the third century a new branch (Alex-BC1) originated from Alex-BC, introducing variant 6.2; this is witnessed by manuscripts B³ and B*, and by the Coptic Sahidic version (cop^{sa}). Manuscript B³ contains the Greek text used for the version cop^{sa}. The Greek text behind the Coptic Boharic version (cop^{bo}) is a mixture of branches Alex-BC1 and Alex-C1.

The Antiochan Text-type

The Antiochan text-type (figure 4) is witnessed by manuscripts D^c, K, 88, 181, 326, 614, 629, 630, 1739, 1877, 1881, 1984, 1985, and 2495; by the composite witness of the two Byzantine traditions (Byz-A and Byz-B) and the composite witness of the Lectionaries (Lect); by the texts of the church fathers, John of Damascus and Theodoret; and by texts behind the Syriac versions syr^h and syr^p, and the Old Latin versions it^d and it^e.

The proto-Antiochan text near the end of the second century appears to have been identical with the original autograph.¹² Sometime in the next hundred years three main branches of the Antiochan text-type originated: Anti-A (introducing variant 15.2), Anti-B (introducing 2.1), and Anti-C (introducing 12.5, plus 4.2 apparently borrowed from the proto-Caesarean text).

The Anti-A branch, which developed sometime before the middle of the fourth century, has no unique descendants. It exhibits its existence through various subsequent mixtures.

The Anti-B branch has no unique descendants, but manuscript D^c is a perfect¹³ mixture of Anti-A and Anti-B. This branch also exhibits its existence through subsequent mixtures.

The Anti-C branch, which appeared about the middle of the third century, introduced variant 12.5, and it seems to be a mixture of proto-Antiochan and proto-Caesarean (4.2). This branch is witnessed by two late manuscripts, 326 and 1877, and by the text behind it^d, it^e, and syr^p.

¹²The date is only approximate because the earliest extant witnesses to this text-type are D^c (c. 450), it^d (c. 450), and Theodoret (c. 450), each several generations removed. Proto-Antiochan is assumed to be identical with the original autograph because its three main branches contain all the readings of the probable autograph except for their own unique variants. That is, they mutually agree on the readings of the probable autograph by a ratio of at least two to one.

¹³Perfect mixture occurs when a manuscript contains all the variants of two or more parent exemplars. In this case, manuscript D^c contains the variant 15.2 from Anti-A and variant 2.1 from Anti-B; all the other readings agree with the probable autograph.

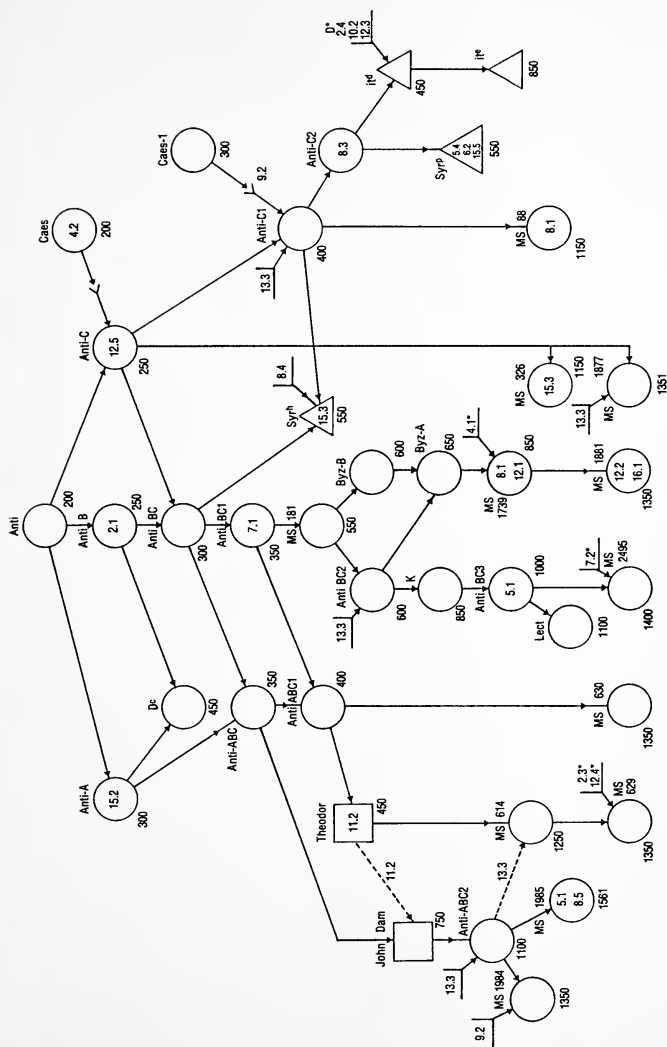


FIGURE 4. Genealogical Tree Diagram of the Antiochan Text-type of the Book of Philippians

Around the beginning of the fourth century Anti-B and Anti-C were mixed, producing the ancestral line (Anti-BC) for the Byzantine tradition. By the middle of the fourth century a text developed (Anti-ABC) that was a mixture of all three, Anti-A, Anti-B, and Anti-C. This text is witnessed by manuscripts 1984 and 1985, and by the text of John of Damascus.

Sometime during the fifth century another mixture took place between Anti-C and the Caesarean text, producing branch Anti-C1 that introduced the Caesarean variant 9.2 and a correction (13.3) from some unknown source (possibly Alex-A7); this text is witnessed by manuscript 88. The text of Anti-C1 became the primary source from which the Old Latin version it^d was made, except for three corrections derived from its companion Greek manuscript D*; the Old Latin it^e is a later faithful copy of it^d. The text of Anti-C1 also was used for the Syriac Peshitta version (syr^p) except for three variants that were probably the fault of the translator. A mixture of Anti-BC and Anti-C1 was the primary text from which the Syriac Harclean version (syr^h) was made, except for one random variant (15.3).

Sometime during the fourth century, variant 7.1 was introduced into the Anti-BC text producing Anti-BC1.¹⁴ This branch is witnessed by manuscript 181 and the subsequent Byzantine tradition (Byz-A, Byz-B, lectionaries, and manuscripts K, 1739, 1881, and 2495), which exhibits further mixture and correction. This text (Anti-BC1) also was mixed with Anti-ABC about the end of the fourth century, producing branch Anti-ABC1; this branch is witnessed by manuscripts 614, 629, and 630, and by the text of Theodoret.

The Caesarean Text-type

The Caesarean text-type (figure 5) exhibits itself vaguely, since it appears that mixture took place quite early; only two witnesses seem to be Caesarean: manuscript 436 and the Greek text behind the Armenian version (arm). The distinguishing characteristics are the common variants 4.2 and 9.2, with no Antiochan or Western group characteristics.

The proto-Caesarean text originated about the end of the second century with the variant 4.2.¹⁵ Shortly afterward this early text was mixed with a branch of the Antiochan text to produce the text of

¹⁴Variant 7.1 may be the result of careless omission, or a correction made under the influence of the Western text or of Alex-B.

¹⁵See previous comments in n. 7. The date is only approximate since the earliest extant witness is the Armenian version (c. 400). However, the evidence of mixture with Anti-C (c. 250) suggests the possible date of A.D. 200.

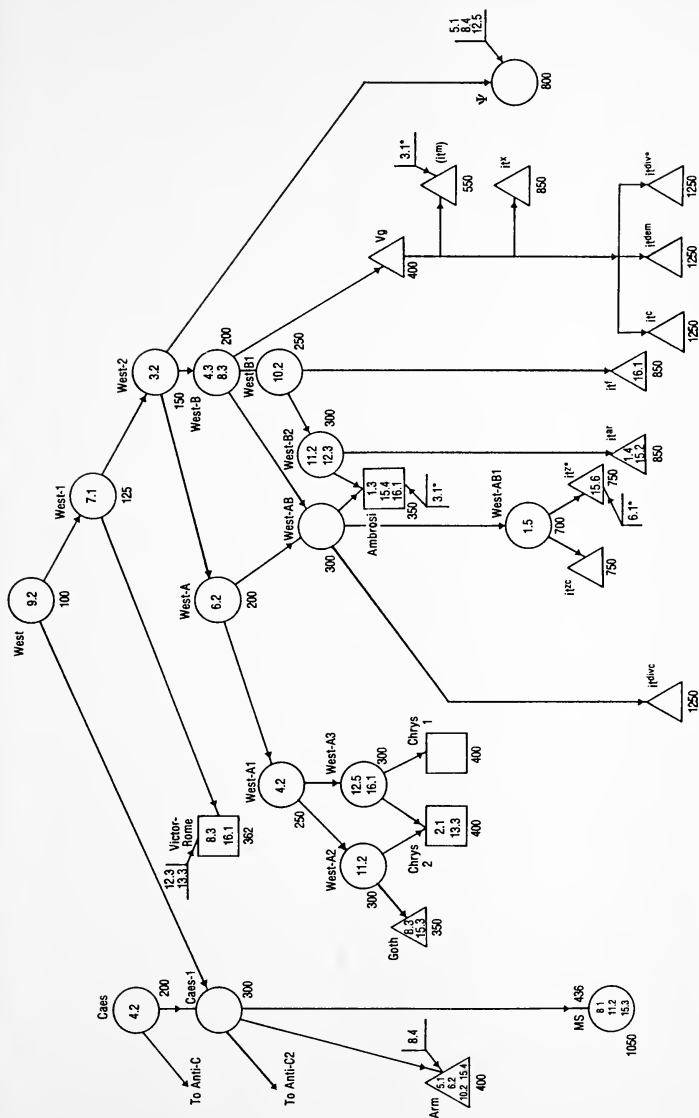


FIGURE 5. Genealogical Tree Diagram of the Caesarean and Western Text-types of the Book of Philippians

Anti-C. Sometime within the next hundred years Proto-Caesarean was mixed with Proto-Western, picking up variant 9.2 and producing the subsequent Caesarean text (Caes).

The Western Text-type

The Western text-type (figure 5) is witnessed by manuscript Ψ, by the texts of Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, and Victor of Rome, and by texts behind the Gothic version (goth) and the Latin versions (vg, it^{ar}, it^c, it^{dem}, it^{div*}, it^{divc}, it^f, it^m, it^x, it^{z*}, it^{zc}).

The proto-Western text originated about the end of the first century with variant 9.2 common to all its descendants.¹⁶ This early text seems to have mixed with Proto-Caesarean and subsequently found its way into one branch of the Antiochan text. Sometime in the first quarter of the second century, a new branch originated (West-1) introducing variant 7.1; this branch is witnessed by the text of Victor of Rome (except for two corrections and two random variants). Shortly afterward a second branch (West-2) originated with variant 3.2; this branch is witnessed by manuscript Ψ (except for three Alexandrian corrections).

Sometime in the first half of the third century the text of West-2 developed two variants independently (6.2, 4.3), producing branches West-A (6.2) and West-B (4.3).¹⁷ The text of West-A underwent further degradation through West-A1, West-A2, and West-A3 to produce the Gothic version and the texts of Chrysostom.

The text of West-B was the source used by Jerome to produce the Latin Vulgate (vg) from which numerous faithful copies were made (it^c, it^{dem}, it^{div*}, it^m, and it^{*}). About the middle of the third century a variant (10.2) was introduced into West-B, producing West-B1; this text is witnessed by it^f (with one additional variant). Shortly afterward, two more variants (11.2, 12.3) were introduced into West-B1, producing West-B2; this text is witnessed by it^{ar} (with two additional variants).

About the end of the third century there was a mixture of texts West-A and West-B, producing West-AB; this text is witnessed by it^{divc}, it^{zc}, and it^{z*} (with one unique variant). The text of Ambrosiaster is a mixture of West-AB and West-B2 (except for three variants).

This reconstructed history of the text may be regarded as a good approximation because it meets the basic expectations of such a

¹⁶The date is only approximate since the earliest extant witnesses are the Gothic version (c. 350), Victor of Rome (c. 362), and Ambrosiaster (c. 350), each several generations removed.

¹⁷Variant 8.3 is a phenomenon of translation, not a variant of the Greek text. The versions where this variant is specified could not distinguish between reading 8.1 and 8.2. The witness of Chrysostom verifies that the Western text had the original reading 8.2.

history: succeeding generations exhibit chronological consistency; variants introduced by a parent exemplar explain the presence of the same variant in all descendant generations of the given branch; there is reasonable simplicity and orderliness in the structure of the diagram.

The next section classifies each extant witness used in this study, identifying its role in the reconstructed history. Although there is some redundancy with the preceding history, the classification of each witness is valuable for helping to locate a witness on the diagrams and to evaluate the contribution of its witness.

MANUSCRIPT CLASSIFICATION

This section lists the classification of each manuscript (or equivalent) used in this study as far as the sixteen variation units used in the study can determine. Each is classified by its immediate genealogical ancestry (its most likely exemplar) and by any deviations from its ancestor.

- \aleph^* a faithful copy of Alex-AC except for one variant (14.2) unique to this manuscript, probably due to scribal carelessness
- \aleph^c a faithful collation of Alex-A5 and Alex-B containing all the variants of both with one correction restoring an original reading (13.4)
- A a faithful collation of Alex-AC and Alex-A4 containing all variants of both
- B^* a copy of B^3 with one random variant (13.2), a careless omission of diacritical marks on the reading of B^3 (13.3)
- B^3 a faithful copy of Alex-BC1 except for one random variant (16.1), a careless omission.
- C an incomplete manuscript that appears to be a copy of \aleph^* except for one unique variant (8.6), a careless omission
- D^* a careless copy (or revision) of Alex-A6 introducing five random variants (2.4, 10.2, 12.3, 13.2, 15.4) and one correction, 8.2, restoring an original reading
- D^c a faithful collation of Anti-A and Anti-B containing all the variants of both
- G^* a copy of Alexandrian manuscript G^c with one unique variant (10.3), a careless metathesis
- G^c a careless recension of Alex-B1 introducing seven random variants (1.3, 2.2, 4.3, 10.2, 13.2, 16.1) (This recension was made to be the exemplar for the independent Old Latin version *it*^g. This manuscript has some Western readings, but they match no observed

Western group patterns; thus its classification as Alexandrian.)

- I an incomplete manuscript that appears to be a copy of Alex-C with one correction (3.2), probably from Alex-A1 or a descendant
- K a faithful copy of Anti-BC2
- P a collation of \aleph^c and Alex-A7 containing all the variants of both with one random variant (13.2), a careless omission of diacritical marks
- Ψ a late copy of West-2 with three Alexandrian corrections (5.1, 8.4, 12.5) not closely related genealogically
- p⁴⁶ a careless collation of Alex-B1 and Alex-C, introducing three unique variants (1.4, 7.3, 9.3) and three random variants (2.1, 10.2, 15.3), all due to carelessness
- 33 a copy of Alex-C1 with three corrections (3.2, 6.2, 11.2) possibly due to scribal emendations
- 81 a copy of Alex-A4 with one unique variant (13.1), a careless scribal error
- 88 a copy of Anti-C1 with one random variant (8.1), a case of careless omission
- 104 a faithful copy of Alex-A2 with one correction (13.4) restoring an original reading
- 181 a faithful copy of Anti-BC1
- 326 a copy of Anti-C with one variant (15.3), possibly accidental omission
- 330 a faithful copy of Alexandrian manuscript 451
- 436 a copy of the Caesarean text with three Alexandrian corrections (8.1, 11.2, 15.3), or possibly cases of scribal carelessness
- 451 a copy of Alex-A2 with one unique variant (5.3), a careless addition, and one correction (4.2) conforming a plural to a singular earlier in the verse
- 614 a copy of the Antiochan text of Theodoret with one correction (13.3), probably from Anti-ABC2 or a descendant
- 629 a copy of Antiochan manuscript 614 with two corrections restoring original readings (2.3, 12.4)
- 630 a faithful copy of Anti-ABC1
- 1241 a copy of Alex-A4 with one correction (13.4), restoring an original reading
- 1739 a copy of the Byzantine tradition (Byz-A) with one correction (4.1) restoring an original reading, and two random variants (8.1 and 12.1), cases of careless omission (The common ancestor of manuscripts 1739

- and 1881 must have had a defect at variation unit 12.)
- 1877 a copy of Anti-C with one correction, 13.3, from an undetermined source
- 1881 a copy of Byzantine manuscript 1739 with one unique variant (12.2) and one random variant (16.1), a careless omission
- 1962 a collation of Alex-A6 and Alex-A7
- 1984 a copy of Anti-ABC2 with one Western correction (9.2)
- 1985 a copy of Anti-ABC2 with one unique variant (8.5) and one random variant (5.1), a careless omission
- 2127 a faithful copy of Alex-A3
- 2492 a faithful copy of Alexandrian manuscript 451
- 2495 a copy of Anti-BC3 with one correction, restoring original reading 7.2
- Byz-A a collation of Anti-BC2 and Byz-B containing all variants of both
- Byz-B a faithful copy of Anti-BC1 or manuscript 181
- Lect the lectionary tradition, a faithful copy of Anti-BC3
- vg the Latin vg, a faithful translation of West-B (The Latin versions could not distinguish between 8.1 and 8.2.)
- it^{ar} a Latin translation of West-B2 with two random variants (1.4, 15.2) probably due to translator emendations
- it^c a faithful copy of the vg
- it^d an independent Old Latin translation from Anti-C2 with three corrections (2.4, 10.2, 12.3) from its companion Greek text D*
- it^{dem} a faithful copy of the vg
- it^{div*} a faithful copy of the vg
- it^{divc} a faithful Latin translation of West-AB
- it^e a faithful copy of Antiochan Old Latin it^d
- it^f a faithful Latin translation of West-B1 with one random variant (16.1), a careless omission
- it^g an independent Old Latin translation from Alexandrian G^c with one unique variant (15.7) and one correction (13.3) properly supplying the diacritical marks missing in its Greek source G^c
- it^m an incomplete copy of the vg
- it^x a faithful copy of the vg
- it^{z*} a Latin translation of West-AB1 with one unique variant (15.6), a translator's blunder, and one correction (6.1) restoring an original reading
- it^{zc} a faithful Latin translation of West-AB1

- syr^h a Syriac translation of a collation of Anti-BC and Anti-C1 with one correction (8.4) from an undetermined source and one random variant (15.3), a careless omission
- syr^p a Syriac translation of Anti-C2 with one unique variant (5.4) and two random variants (6.2, 15.5), an omission and a case of overtranslation
- cop^{bo} the Coptic Boharic version translated from Alex-C1 with two random variants (4.2, 15.5), a case of carelessness and overtranslation, and with one correction (6.2), possibly from Alex-BC1
- cop^{sa} the Coptic Sahidic version translated from the text of B³ except for the translational ambiguity (8.3), with two random variants (4.3, 15.5), a case of omission and overtranslation
- arm the Armenian version translated from the Caesarean text (Caes-1) with four random variants (5.1, 6.2, 10.2, 15.4), all the result of carelessness, and one correction (8.4)
- goth the Gothic version translated from West-A2 except for the translational ambiguity (8.3) and one random variant (15.3), accidental omission
- eth^{pp} the Ethiopic version (Pell Platt and Praetorius) translated from a collation of Alex-AC1 and Alex-A5
- eth^{ro} the Ethiopic version (Rome) faithfully translated from Alex-AC1
- Ambrosiaster the text of the Western church father, a collation of West-AB and West B2 with three random variants (1.3, 15.4, 16.1) due to carelessness and one correction (3.1) restoring an original reading
- Augustine the text of the North African church father, incomplete, but possibly a copy of Alex-C1 with one random variant (15.4)
- Chrysostom the text of the Western church father, a copy of West-A3 (This text verifies that the Western text had the original reading 8.2. Chrysostom also had a text that was a collation of West-A2 and West-A3, with two random variants [2.1 and 13.3].)
- Clement the text of the Alexandrian church father, incomplete, but possibly a copy of Alex-A2
- Eusebius the text of the Caesarean church father, incomplete, but evidently a copy of the Alexandrian text Alex-A4
- Euthalius the text of the Alexandrian church father, incomplete, but possibly a copy of Alex-A4

- Hilary the text of the Western church father, incomplete, but possibly a copy of Alex-C with one correction (13.4)
- John of Damascus the text of the Eastern church father, a copy of Anti-ABC with one correction (11.2), possibly from the text of Theodoret
- Origen the text of the North African church father, incomplete, but probably a copy of Alex-BC (Along with the expected 9.1, Origen had a text reading 9.2.)
- Theodoret the text of the Eastern church father, a copy of Anti-ABC1 with one random variant (11.2) (Along with the expected 9.1, Theodoret also had a text reading 9.2.)
- Victor of Rome the text of the Western church father, a copy of West-1 with two corrections (12.3, 13.3) from unknown sources, and two random variants (8.3, 16.1)

TEXTUAL COMMENTARY

This section evaluates each variant reading, giving an estimated genealogical probability of its being the reading of the original autograph (external evidence), and the possible cause of its origination if not the original reading (internal evidence). The probability is estimated on the basis of agreement among ancient independent witnesses as determined by the computer program within the bounds of its limitations. The estimate considers all second-generation witnesses to be of equal weight (Alex-A, Alex-B, Alex-C, Anti-A, Anti-B, Anti-C, Caes, West-A, West-B;¹⁸ a total of nine for this problem). This gives the Alexandrian and Antiochan texts a weight of three, the Western text a weight of two, and the Caesarean text, one.

In estimating probability, a reading would be given a weight of one for each second-generation branch that wholly supports it. Thus a reading that is supported wholly by seven second-generation branches would have an estimated probability of $\frac{7}{7} = 0.77$. If a reading is partially supported by a second-generation branch, a weighting proportionately less than one would be assigned for that branch based on an estimated proportion of its support. For example, in a given second-generation branch, if a reading is supported by two out of three third-generation branches, the reading would be assigned a weighting of $\frac{2}{3} = 0.67$ for the given branch. Thus a reading that is supported wholly by five second-generation branches and partially (say 0.67) by another second-generation branch would have an estimated probability of $^{5.67}_{7} = 0.63$. An estimated probability of 1.0

¹⁸In the case of the Western text, West-A and West-B are fourth-generation witnesses, but they represent the first major branching of the Western text.

means that all ancient witnesses wholly support the reading and there is no doubt that it is the reading of the autograph; a probability of 0.0 means that the reading is not supported by any ancient witnesses and there is no possibility of its being the reading of the autograph.

This method provides an objective means for estimating genealogical probabilities. Although some uncertainty is involved and some subjective judgment is required, the results provide a more objective means of determining cumulative genealogical weight than current methods.

Readings Evaluated

This section evaluates each variant, listing its estimated probability of being the original reading and the evidence supporting the reading. The decision is compared with the choice of five modern English versions (*KJV*, *NKJV*, *NIV*, *NASB*, and *RSV*), and with the choice of ten critical commentators or textual editors (H. Alford, F. F. Bruce, J. Eadie, G. F. Hawthorne, J. B. Lightfoot, H. A. W. Meyer, J. J. Muller, A. T. Robertson, M. R. Vincent, and Westcott and Hort). Also mentioned are the choices of K. Lachmann and C. von Tischendorf when cited in one of the above commentators. (Subsequent references to commentators include only these.) The choice of UBSGNT³ is listed together with its estimated degree of certainty in parentheses. In every case, Nestle-Aland (*Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th ed.) agrees with the choice of UBSGNT³ and is not mentioned separately.¹⁹

Philippians 1:11

1.1. καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ (probability 0.96). Supported by all Alexandrian (except two fourth-generation branches Alex-A6 and G^c, both of which are closely related to recensons), by all Antiochan and Caesarean, and by all Western (except one late negligible branch, West-AB1). The evidence is strong and distributed with only very weak alternatives. So UBSGNT³ (B), all versions, and commentators.

1.2. καὶ ἔπαινον χριστοῦ (probability 0.02). Supported by only one fourth-generation branch (Alex-A6, witnessed by D* and 1962). This is likely due to a scribal error \overline{XY} for $\overline{\Theta Y}$ (Metzger).²⁰

1.3. καὶ ἔπαινόν μοι (probability 0.02). Supported by one fourth-generation Alexandrian branch (G^c and its descendants G* and it^g),

¹⁹B. M. Metzger (*Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [London: United Bible Society, 1971]) treats five additional variant readings in Philippians. These were not included in this study because he did not give a complete list of manuscripts supporting each reading.

²⁰References in this section are made to Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 611–18.

and by Ambrosiaster in the West. These are apparently two independent scribal blunders; the reading has no parallel in Paul (Metzger).

1.4. *θεοῦ καὶ ἔπαινον ἐμοί* (probability 0.0). Supported only by p⁴⁶ and it^{ar} (virtually). A possible conflation, one of several unique readings in p⁴⁶.

1.5. *καὶ ἔπαινον αὐτοῦ* (probability 0.0). Supported only by one late branch, West-ABI (it^{z*} and it^{zc}). Possibly a simplification of the redundancy of *χριστοῦ* (Metzger).

Philippians 1:14

2.3. *λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖν* (probability 0.89). Supported by all Alexandrian (except p⁴⁶, D*, and G^c with its descendants), by two second-generation branches of Antiochan (Anti-A and Anti-C), by Caesarean and all Western. Contrary to UBSGNT³, the evidence is strong and distributed with only one weak alternative. Supported by *NASB*, *NIV*, *RSV*, Bruce, Lachmann, Lightfoot, Muller, Tischendorf, Vincent, and Westcott-Hort.

2.1. *λόγον λαλεῖν* (probability 0.11). Supported only by one second-generation branch (Anti-B)²¹ and p⁴⁶. Best understood as a careless omission. The support is weak and local. This reading is the choice of *KJV*, *NKJV*, Alford, Eadie, Hawthorne, and Meyer, as well as UBSGNT³(D). However, Metzger admitted that 2.3 has the better weight and distribution, but rejected it as an apparent scribal expansion, allowing subjective judgment to overrule strong external evidence.

2.2. *λόγον κυριοῦ λαλεῖν* (probability 0.0). Supported only by one fourth-generation Alexandrian branch (G^c and its descendants). Probably a confusion of \overline{KY} for $\overline{\Theta Y}$, because G^c contains several other careless blunders.

2.4. *λόγον λαλεῖν τοῦ θεοῦ* (probability 0.0.). Supported only by D* and its Old Latin companion it^d (with its descendant it^e). Probably careless metathesis; D* contains several other careless blunders.

Philippians 2:2

3.1. *ἐν* (probability 0.80). Supported by all Alexandrian (except Alex-AI, Alex-A6, I and 33), by all Antiochan and Caesarean, and by Proto-West and West-1. The evidence is strong and distributed. Supported by all versions, all commentators and UBSGNT³(B).

²¹It is noted that Anti-B practically dominates the main portion of the Antiochan text. If a weight of 3.0 were given to reading 2.1 on this basis, its probability would still be only 0.33, not enough to outweigh the strong support of reading 2.3, which would still have a probability of 0.67, with a ratio of two to one.

3.2. *αὐτό* (probability 0.20). Supported by one third-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-A1), one fourth-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-A6), and by most of the Western text except the earliest witnesses (Proto-West and West-1). These probably are the result of independent instances of scribal assimilation of the preceding *αὐτό* (Metzger).

Philippians 2:4

4.1. *ἐκαστοι* (probability 0.45). Supported by all Alexandrian (except three fourth-generation branches, Alex-C2, Alex-AC1, and G^c with its descendants) and by two of three second-generation Antiochan branches (Anti-A and Anti-B), although they contribute little to the main Antiochan tradition for this variation unit. The evidence is moderate with some distribution. So UBSGNT³(B), supported by all commentators. The choice of the versions is unclear.

4.2. *ἐκαστος* (probability 0.31). Supported by one fourth-generation Alexandrian branch (cop^{bo}), by one second-generation Antiochan branch (Anti-C), by Caesarean, and by one fifth-generation Western branch (West-A1). But this is probably due to an early scribal error in Proto-Caesarean also committed independently in West-A1 and cop^{bo}, conforming to the singular at the first part of the verse, particularly because the plural form is very rare and so is unexpected. However the witness of Anti-C may be given more weight since this reading is abundant in the Antiochan text. This reading is supported by the *KJV*.

4.3. *omit* (probability 0.24). Supported by one fourth-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-AC1), by G^c (with its descendants) and cop^{sa}, and by West-B and West-AB. The word was probably omitted as superfluous (Metzger). This reading seems to be supported by all the versions except *KJV*, but this may be due to translational smoothing.

Philippians 2:5

5.2. *τοῦτο γάρ* (probability 0.80). Supported by all Alexandrian (except Alex-C1 and Alex-A4), by all Antiochan (except Anti-BC3 and 1985), by part of Caesarean, and all Western (except Ψ). The early witness is strong and distributed, contrary to UBSGNT³. Supported by Eadie and Meyer.

5.1. *τοῦτο* (probability 0.20). Supported only by a few unrelated branches—by two third-generation Alexandrian branches (Alex-A1 and Alex-C1), by one fourth-generation Antiochan branch (Anti-BC1, the Byzantine tradition), by part of Caesarean (arm), and by Ψ and

1985. These are best understood as careless omissions, possibly because the logical connection implied by γάρ is difficult to understand. Metzger found no good reason for the omission of γάρ, but the weak external evidence does not justify accepting it as original. In spite of the evidence, this reading is supported by all the versions, most of the commentators, and by UBSGNT³(C).

5.3. τοῦτο οὖν (*probability 0.0*). Supported only by 451 and its own two descendants, all late. Obviously a scribal innovation.

5.4. καὶ τοῦτο (*probability 0.0*). Supported only by the Syriac version syr^p. Obviously a translator's innovation not supported by any Greek authority.

Philippians 2:12

6.1. ὡς (*probability 0.76*). Supported by all Alexandrian (except Alex-AC1 and Alex-BC1), by all Antiochan (except syr^p), by part of Caesarean, and by West-B. The evidence is strong and distributed, so UBSGNT³(B). Supported by all the versions (except *NIV*) and all the commentators.

6.2. omit (*probability 0.24*). Supported by only two fourth-generation Alexandrian branches (Alex-AC1 and Alex-BC1), by part of Caesarean (arm), and by West-A. The copyists may have omitted the word as superfluous or may have done so accidentally (Metzger). Supported by *NIV*, but this may be due to translational smoothing.

Philippians 2:26

7.2. ὑμᾶς ἰδεῖν (*probability 0.56*). Supported by two of three second-generation Alexandrian branches (Alex-A and Alex-C), by all Antiochan (except Anti-BC1, the Byzantine tradition), and by Caesarean. Contrary to UBSGNT³, the evidence is moderate and distributed. Metzger regarded the insertion of ἰδεῖν to be more likely than its omission. But the probability favors ἰδεῖν as original, and 1:8 would set the pattern for its omission. The reading is supported by Bruce and Meyer, and is included in brackets by Lachmann and by Westcott and Hort.

7.1. ὑμᾶς (*probability 0.44*). Supported by one second-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-B), by one fourth-generation Antiochan branch (Anti-BC1, the Byzantine tradition), and by all Western. This may be the result of three separate cases of careless omission. The evidence is mild with some distribution. Although the probability is somewhat less for this reading, it is supported by most commentators, by all the versions, and by UBSGNT³(C). Metzger regarded the external evidence to be evenly balanced.

7.3. *πρὸς ὁμᾶς (after gap) (probability 0.0)*. Supported only by p⁴⁶. Another evidence of the carelessness of the copyist.

Philippians 2:30

8.2. *τοῦ Χριστοῦ (probability 0.55)*. Supported by all Antiochan and all Western. Although most witnesses of the Western text are versions that cannot distinguish between 8.1 and 8.2, the evidence of Chrysostom verifies that the Western text had 8.2. Contrary to UBSGNT³, the evidence is stronger and more distributed than the other readings. Supported by Eadie.

8.1. *Χριστοῦ (probability 0.17)*. Supported by only one third-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-B1), by part of Caesarean (late manuscript 436), and by two late Antiochan manuscripts of negligible weight (1739, 1881). This can be regarded as a few isolated cases of careless omission of a somewhat superfluous article. This reading is supported by Hawthorne, Muller, Vincent and by UBSGNT³(C). The versions do not distinguish between 8.1 and 8.2, but do support one or the other. The combined probability (0.72) of the two readings assures that at least Χριστοῦ is original.

8.4. *Κυρίου (probability 0.28)*. Supported by all Alexandrian except one third-generation branch (Alex-B1), by part of Caesarean (arm), and by Ψ (of negligible weight). The reading may have been substituted for Χριστοῦ by copyists who remembered a similar expression from 1 Cor 15:58 and 16:10 (Metzger). Supported by Westcott and Hort.

8.5. *Τοῦ θεοῦ (probability 0.0)*. A unique reading of 1985 unknown to any of its near relatives. May have originated from the confusion of \overline{XY} for $\Theta\overline{Y}$ (Metzger) or from accidental theological substitution, as perhaps Chrysostom did in his commentary.

8.6. *omit (probability 0.0)*. A unique reading of C, a careless omission not known to its near relatives. In spite of the unlikelihood of this reading, it is preferred by Alford, Lightfoot, Meyer, and Tischendorf.

Philippians 3:3

9.1. *Θεοῦ (probability 0.63)*. Supported by all Alexandrian except one third-generation branch (Alex-A3), and by all Antiochan. The evidence is strong with some distribution. Supported by *NASB*, *NIV*, by all the commentators, and by UBSGNT³ (C).

9.2. *θεῶ (probability 0.37)*. Supported by one third-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-A3), by Caesarean and all Western. Appears to be an emendation to provide an object for λατρεύοντες as in

Rom. 1:9 and 2 Tim 1:3 (Metzger). Supported by *KJV*, *NKJV*, and *RSV*.

9.3. *omit (probability 0.0)*. Supported only by p⁴⁶. A careless omission unknown to its near relatives. Further evidence of the carelessness of p⁴⁶.

Philippians 3:12

10.1. *ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι (probability 0.87)*. Supported by all Alexandrian except one fourth-generation branch (G^c with its descendants) and two fifth-generation branches (D* and p⁴⁶), by all Antiochan, by part of Caesarean (436), and by all Western except one fifth-generation branch (West-B1). The evidence is strong and distributed. Supported by all versions, all commentators, and by UBSGNT³ (B).

10.2. *ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι (probability 0.13)*. Supported by the three fourth- or fifth-generation Alexandrian branches mentioned above, all of which exhibit evidence of carelessness, and part of Caesarean (arm). See Metzger's explanation.

10.3. *ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι ἢ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι (probability 0.0)*. The unique reading of one manuscript (G*), the careless metathesis of the text of its exemplar (G^c).

Philippians 3:13

11.1. *οὐ (probability 0.78)*. Supported by two of three second-generation Alexandrian branches (Alex-B and Alex-C), by all Antiochan, part of Caesarean (arm), and by all of Western except two minor branches (West-A1 and West-B2). The evidence is strong and distributed. Supported by *KJV*, *NKJV*, *RSV*, by six of the commentators, and by UBSGNT³ (C).

11.2. *οὕτω (probability 0.22)*. Supported by one second-generation Alexandrian (Alex-A), by part of Caesarean, and by two minor Western branches (West-A2 and West-B2). An emendation by copyists eager to strengthen Paul's protestations (Metzger). In spite of the weak support, this reading was preferred by *NASB*, *NIV*, Muller, Tischendorf, and Vincent; and Westcott and Hort included it in brackets.

Philippians 3:16

12.4. *τὸ αὐτὸ προνεῖν, τῷ αὐτῷ κανόνι στοιχεῖν (probability 0.52)*. Supported by the bulk of two second-generation Alexandrian branches (Alex-A and Alex-B), by two second-generation Antiochan branches (Anti-A and Anti-B with limited weight), by Caesarean, and

the bulk of Western. The evidence is strong and distributed, UBSGNT³ notwithstanding. Readings 12.3 and 12.5 bear witness of this one in altered form. Their combined probabilities (0.90) assure the originality of this reading against the alternatives. Metzger regards τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν to be a gloss (cf. 12.5); but in this reading, which has the stronger probability, it cannot be a gloss; 12.5 is more likely explained as metathesis on this reading.

12.5. τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν κανόνι, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν (probability 0.30). Supported by one fourth-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-A5), by one second-generation Antiochan branch with heavy weight (Anti-C), and by one minor Western branch (West-A3). Only moderate strength with limited distribution. Probably arose from careless metathesis of 12.4, the evident original reading from which this one descended.

12.3. τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν (probability 0.08). Supported only by two minor Alexandrian branches (D* and G^c) both evidencing carelessness, and by one minor Western branch (West-B2) with Victor of Rome. Probably arose by careless omission of κανόνι from 12.4, the evident original reading.

12.1. τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν (probability 0.10). Supported only by one second-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-C), and one fourth-generation branch (Alex-AC). Probably arose because of homoeoteleuton, limited to one branch. It lacks strength or distribution. In spite of the weak external evidence, this reading is preferred by NASB, NIV, RSV, most of the commentators, and by UBSGNT³(B). But this reading can be explained by one scribal error in only one exemplar (Alex-C).

12.2. τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν (probability 0.0). The unique reading of one late manuscript (1881) unknown to its near relatives. Probably arose because of homoeoteleuton from 12.5, the reading of most of its ancestors.

Philippians 3:21

13.4. ἐαυτῷ (probability 0.55). Supported by several minor Alexandrian branches, by the bulk of all three second-generation Antiochan branches (except a few minor ones—Anti-ABC2, Anti-BC2, Anti-C1, 1877), by Caesarean, and by all Western (except two church fathers). The evidence is moderately strong and distributed, contrary to Metzger who evaluated the authorities as inferior. The reading appears to be supported by KJV, NKJV, NASB, and RSV, although they may have translated 13.3 (αὐτῷ) as a reflexive.

13.3. αὐτῷ (probability 0.39). Supported by the bulk of the Alexandrian text (except those minor branches supporting 13.2 and

13.4), by minor Antiochan branches (Anti-ABC-2, Anti-BC2, Anti-C1, and 1877), and by two Western church fathers (Chrysostom and Victor of Rome). This is the preference of UBSGNT³(B), but the evidence is weak, and though distributed, it appears in minor branches outside the Alexandrian text. This probably arose through several independent emendations of copyists following the prevailing Hellenistic usage in which the unaspirated form came to function as a reflexive in addition to its normal usage (Metzger). The reading is supported by *NIV* and by most of the commentators.

13.2. *αὐτῶ* (probability 0.06). Supported by a few minor Alexandrian branches (Alex-AC, D*, G^c, and B*). Arose because of careless omission of diacritical marks from 13.3, the prominent Alexandrian reading. These probably support the reading 13.3 against 13.4. The evidence is weak and localized.

13.1. *αὐτῷ* (probability 0.0). The unique reading of one late manuscript (81) unknown to any of its near relatives. Accepted as the probable reading by UBSGNT², it was rightly rejected by UBSGNT³. Expected by the generally accepted conventions of Greek orthography (Metzger), this must have arisen because of a copyist's correction of the Hellenistic usage (13.3) in North Africa. Supported only by Westcott and Hort.

Philippians 4:3

14.1. *τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου* (probability 1.0). Supported by all witnesses except \aleph^* . The reading is supported by all versions and commentators. In spite of the overwhelming evidence for this reading, UBSGNT³ gave it a degree of certainty of only "B," probably because of respect for \aleph^* , the only clear witness against it.

14.2. *τῶν συνεργῶν μου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν* (probability 0.0). The unique reading of \aleph^* unknown to any of its near relatives.²² Due to scribal inadvertence (Metzger). This variation unit contributed nothing to the reconstruction of textual history. Unique readings of this kind need not be included in the data base, nor, for that matter, in the critical apparatus.

Philippians 4:16

15.1. *εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι* (probability 0.65). Supported by all Alexandrian (except one third-generation branch, Alex-A2, and one fifth-generation branch, Alex-A7), by two of three second-generation Antiochan branches (Anti-B and Anti-C), and by all Western (except

²²Papyrus p¹⁶ seems to support this reading, but it is so fragmentary that its genealogical relationship to the other Alexandrian manuscripts cannot be determined.

the Gothic version, the Latin *it*^{ar}, *it*^z, and Ambrosiaster). The evidence is moderately strong and distributed. This reading is preferred by UBSGNT³(C) and by Alford, Eadie, Hawthorne, Westcott-Hort and Lightfoot; most others did not discuss this variation unit.

15.2. *εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μου* (probability 0.13). Supported in Antiochan by one second-generation branch (Anti-A) and in Alexandrian by one fifth-generation branch (Alex-A7). Probably two independent scribal emendations of the less usual dative *μοι* (Metzger). This reading seems to be supported by *KJV*, *NKJV*, and *NASB*.

15.3. *τὴν χρεῖαν μοι* (probability 0.17). Supported by one third-generation Alexandrian branch (Alex-A2), by part of Caesarean, and by one minor Western branch (West-A1). Probably three independent cases of accidental omission of *εἰς* after *δῖς*, or deliberate omission in order to provide a direct object for the verb *ἐπέμψατε* (Metzger). This reading seems to be supported by *NIV* and *RSV*, although the appearance may be due to translational smoothing.

15.4. *τὴν χρεῖαν μου* (probability 0.05). Supported only by D*, arm, Augustine, and Ambrosiaster. Probably four independent cases of combined omission and emendation as in 15.2 and 15.3.

15.5. *μοι εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μου* (probability 0.0). Supported by two versions, cop and syr^p, but by no Greek authority. Apparently the result of overtranslation (Metzger) in an authority common to both, not shown in the genealogical diagram.

15.6. *in unum mihi* (probability 0.0). A unique reading of one version, *it*^z, unknown to its near relatives, or the Greek.

15.7. *in necessitatem meam vel usibus meis* (probability 0.0). A unique reading of one version, *it*^g, unknown to its near relatives, or the Greek.

Philippians 4:23

16.2. *ὑμῶν. ἀμήν* (probability 0.89). Supported by all Alexandrian except three minor branches G^c, B³, and Euthalius, by all Antiochan and Caesarean, and by all Western except two minor branches (West-A3 and *it*^f). The evidence is strong and distributed. The reading is supported by *KJV* and *NKJV*, by Bruce, Hawthorne, and Muller, and it is listed in brackets by Alford, Lachmann, and Lightfoot. Metzger regarded ἀμήν to be a liturgical addition, but it is hard to explain a liturgical correction on a second-century papyrus (p⁴⁶).

16.1. *ὑμῶν*. (probability 0.11). Supported only by three minor Alexandrian branches (G^c, B³, and Euthalius), and by two minor Western branches (West-A3 and *it*^f). Probably due to omission by careless copyists. In each case the reading is unknown to near relatives. In spite of its weak support, this reading was preferred by

TABLE 3
Comparison of Probabilities

Variation Unit	Probability of Variant						Ratio of Two Highest
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	0.96	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	—	48.00
2	0.11	0.00	0.89	0.00	—	—	8.09
3	0.80	0.20	—	—	—	—	4.00
4	0.45	0.31	0.24	—	—	—	1.45
5	0.20	0.80	0.00	0.00	—	—	4.00
6	0.76	0.24	—	—	—	—	3.16
7	0.44	0.56	0.00	—	—	—	1.27
8	0.17	0.55	0.00	0.28	0.00	0.00	1.96
9	0.63	0.37	0.00	—	—	—	1.70
10	0.87	0.13	0.00	—	—	—	6.67
11	0.78	0.22	—	—	—	—	3.54
12	0.10	0.00	0.08	0.52	0.30	—	1.73
13	0.00	0.06	0.39	0.55	—	—	1.41
14	1.00	0.00	—	—	—	—	inf.
15	0.65	0.13	0.17	0.05	0.00	0.00	3.82
16	0.11	0.89	—	—	—	—	8.09

NASB, NIV, RSV, by Eadie, Tischendorf, Vincent, Westcott and Hort, and by UBSGNT³(B).

Results Compared

Table 3 compares the genealogical probabilities of the variant readings involved in this study. The last column gives the ratio of the two highest probabilities. Where the ratio is greater than about 2.0, there is some confidence that the reading with the highest probability is the original one. For ratios less than 2.0, internal evidence is needed to confirm the probabilities.

The following nine readings seem to be original on the basis of the genealogical probabilities: 1.1, 2.3, 3.1, 5.2, 6.1, 10.1, 11.1, 14.1, and 16.2. Reading 4.1 (ἐκαστοι) has the probability advantage over 4.2 (ἐκαστος); this is supported by the internal evidence. Scribes would be more inclined to conform the inflexional number to the preceding singular than to make an inflexional change to the rare plural form.

Reading 7.2 (ὁμᾶς ἰδεῖν) has the probability advantage over 7.1 (ὁμᾶς). Metzger rightly regarded the insertion of ἰδεῖν to be more likely than its omission; it appears to add an interpretive restraint to a more general statement. However, it is hard to explain the distribution of such a sophisticated insertion. In this case, the internal

probability is difficult to evaluate. Nevertheless, the superior strength of the genealogical support for 7.2 favors keeping ἰδεῖν.

Reading 8.2 (τοῦ Χριστοῦ) has the probability advantage over 8.4 (κυρίου) with a ratio just under 2.0. The latter reading is likely to have arisen through memory substitution. Its lack of support outside the Alexandrian branch agrees with the internal probabilities that 8.4 is not original. (Arm and Ψ, the only outside support, appear to have experienced Alexandrian correction.)

Reading 9.1 (θεοῦ) has the probability advantage over 9.2 (θεῶ). The latter appears to be an emendation based on an apparent need for an object for the verb λατρεύοντες. The internal probability agrees with the external probability of the superiority of 9.1.

Reading 12.4 (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, τῷ κανόνι στοιχεῖν) has the probability advantage over 12.5 (τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν κανόνι, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν). The latter can be explained as careless metathesis. Although the distribution of the reading is difficult to explain, there is sufficient agreement between the internal and external probabilities to support the superiority of 12.4.

Reading 13.4 (ἑαυτῷ) has the probability advantage over 13.3 (αὐτῷ). The latter may be regarded as an emendation to accommodate Hellenistic usage. There is sufficient agreement of the internal and external probabilities to support the superiority of 13.4.

Of the six readings for which the statistical-advantage ratio is less than 2.0, five are supported by internal evidence, and thus more likely to be original than their nearest competitors. Only with variant 7.2 is the internal evidence uncertain.

Of the sixteen readings selected as most likely to be original, nine agree with the choice of UBSGNT³ (1.1, 3.1, 4.1, 6.1, 9.1, 10.1, 11.1, 14.1, 15.1); these readings also were the choice of all (or most) of the commentators. Of the seven that disagree with the choice of UBSGNT³, five are the choice of some commentators (2.3, 5.2, 7.2, 8.2, 16.2); only two seem to have been rejected by all commentators (12.4, 13.4). Of these two, one (12.4) is an excellent example of the advantage of the genealogical method over the eclectic method; the genealogical method was able to explain the reading preferred by UBSGNT³ and the commentators (12.1) as having originated by one scribal error in only one exemplar. The second (13.4) is an example of how the genealogical method may demonstrate the superior distribution of a reading supported by evidence regarded as inferior by Metzger and the commentators.

Of the nine readings rated by UBSGNT³ with a certainty degree of "B," six were accepted here as original, and only three were rejected (12.1, 13.3, 16.1). The first two (12.1, 13.3) were discussed above. The third reading (16.1) was rejected because of its obvious lateness and lack of distribution; the accepted reading (16.2) was the choice of six of the commentators. It appears that Metzger and the

others allowed subjective reasons to overrule the strong external evidence in this case.

Of the six readings rated by UBSGNT³ with a certainty degree of "C," three were rejected (5.1, 7.1, 8.1). The first (5.1) was rejected because the genealogical method exposed it as a few cases of late, sporadic, careless omission; whereas the accepted reading (5.2; with which two commentators agreed) exhibited early, wide distribution. The second (7.1) was rejected because the genealogical method discovered a weaker distribution for the reading which can be explained as three separate cases of careless omission; whereas the accepted reading (7.2) exhibited stronger distribution which cannot be explained as wide-scale additions; and the accepted reading is the choice of four commentators. The third (8.1) was rejected because the genealogical method exposed its lateness and lack of distribution, explaining it as a few isolated cases of careless omission of a somewhat superfluous article; whereas the accepted reading (8.2), supported by Eadie, exhibited much better distribution which cannot be explained as wide-scale additions.

The one reading rated by UBSGNT³ with a certainty degree of "D" (2.1) was rejected as not original. The genealogical method exposed the reading as weak and local, explaining it as two isolated cases of careless omission; whereas the accepted reading (2.3; with which seven commentators agreed) exhibited strong, distributed support.

*Degradation of the text*²³

Of the 118 manuscripts involved in this study (73 extant and 45 created by the program), 97 exhibit simple descent from one exemplar; 20 exhibit descent from two exemplars; and only 1 exhibits descent from 3 exemplars. There were 27 that exhibited corrections from unidentified sources. This suggests that the text degraded in a simple fashion with only 18% experiencing mixture.

Of the 21 manuscripts exhibiting mixture, 8 are dated 200 to 300, 8 more are dated 350 to 500, and only 5 occurred after 500. This suggests that most of the mixture occurred in the third to sixth centuries, with none necessarily occurring in the first two centuries. These mixed texts may represent simple recensional attempts to recover a more authoritative text.

Of the 118 manuscripts, 27% were faithful copies of their parent exemplar; another 46% introduced only one random variant or correction; another 13% introduced two random variants or corrections; only 8% introduced three random variants or corrections; and

²³The reader is reminded that the following observations are still an interpretation of the results of the computer analysis and are subject to all the limitations previously mentioned.

only 6% introduced more than three. This suggests that the degradation was gradual. The fact that only 27 manuscripts appear to have made corrections suggest that the degradation was cumulative with little self-correction. Those manuscripts introducing a large number of variants were probably complex recensions.

Versions and Fathers

The ancient versions were usually made from a form of the then current local text. The Coptic and Ethiopic versions were made from forms of the Alexandrian text; the Syriac versions were made from forms of the Antiochan text (with Caesarean mixture); the Armenian version was made from the Caesarean text (with Western mixture); and the Gothic and Latin versions were made from forms of the Western text. The only exception seems to be some of the Old Latin versions: the Old Latin it^d seems to have been translated from a form of the Antiochan text (Anti-C2); and the Old Latin it^g seems to have been translated from a form of the Alexandrian text (G^c).

The church fathers usually quoted from a form of their current local text. North African fathers Augustine, Clement, Euthalius, and Origen quoted from forms of the Alexandrian text. Eastern fathers John of Damascus and Theodoret quoted from forms of the Antiochan text. Western fathers Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, and Victor of Rome quoted from forms of the Western text. The only exceptions were Western father Hilary who seems to have quoted from a form of the Alexandrian text, and Caesarean father Eusebius who seems to have quoted from a form of the Alexandrian.

Recensions

Several manuscripts in the study appear to be recensions that were made for a specific purpose. These are characterized by multiple parentage or a high percentage of random variants introduced in the manuscripts.

Manuscript G^c appears to be a recension of the Alexandrian text (Alex-B). It introduces seven random variants, some of which are unique. These seven variants match no known grouping pattern in Philippians; but its three Alexandrian readings (7.1, 8.1, 13.3) match the grouping pattern of Alex-B1, thus its classification as Alexandrian. The recension evidently was made to provide a Greek text from which to translate the independent Old Latin version it^g.

Alex-AC1, a collation of Alex-A2, Alex-A3, and Alex-C1, is the only manuscript with triple parentage. It appears to be a recension made to provide a Greek text from which to translate the Ethiopic versions.

Manuscript D* appears to be a recension of the Alexandrian text (Alex-A6). It introduces five random variants, some of which are unique, and one correction. These five variants match no known grouping pattern in Philippians; but its four Alexandrian readings (1.2, 9.2, 11.2, 13.3) match the grouping pattern of Alex-A6, thus its classification as Alexandrian. The recension was made to be a parallel text with the Old Latin version it^d, contributing three corrections to that version. For some strange reason, however, it^d was actually translated from an Antiochan text (Anti-C2), apart from the three corrections taken from D*.

The Syriac version, syr^h, was made from a recension made by collating Anti-BC and Anti-C1, with two new variants. The Armenian version was made from an apparent recension of the Caesarean (Caes-1) that introduced four random variants and one correction.

Text-Types Compared

Contrary to expectation, the Alexandrian text-type exhibited greater degradation at an earlier date than the others, and the Alexandrian manuscripts contained more variants on the average than those of its other traditions. Of the 31 manuscripts in the Alexandrian tradition there was a total of 228 variants introduced, making an average of 7.35 variants per extant manuscript. The Antiochan tradition had 23 manuscripts with 108 variants averaging 4.70 per manuscript. The Caesarean tradition had an average of 6.0 per manuscript, whereas the Western tradition averaged 6.82 per manuscript.²⁴

This study suggests that for Philippians the Antiochan tradition degraded the least in the early centuries, and that Antiochan manuscripts are the most reliable. For example, the manuscripts traditionally regarded as most reliable were more distant from the autograph than the Byzantine tradition. Manuscript \aleph^* differed from the probable autograph by 8 variants, B* differed by 9, and p⁴⁶ by 10, whereas Byz-B differed from the probable autograph by only 4 variants, and Byz-A by 5. This is explained on the basis of greater degradation and mixture in the genealogical history of the Alexandrian manuscripts.

Representative Manuscripts

A set of 9 manuscripts was isolated from the 73 used in this study. These 9 serve as good representatives of the early form of the

²⁴This comparison of necessity overlooks the fact that some sigla treated as a single manuscript really represent composite groups of manuscripts, so for example Byz and Lect in the Antiochan branch, vg in the Western branch, eth and cop in the Alexandrian branch, and arm in the Caesarean branch.

four ancient text-types. From the Alexandrian tradition manuscripts κ^c , 33, and 104 approximately represent the witness of Alex-A, Alex-B, and Alex-C. From the Antiochan tradition manuscripts D^c, 181, and 326 approximately represent the witness of Anti-A, Anti-B, and Anti-C. Manuscript 436 represents the Caesarean tradition, and vg and it^{divc} approximately represent the Western tradition.

The mutual consent of these 9 manuscripts agrees with the readings of the autograph as determined by the genealogical witness of the entire set of 73. This suggests that these manuscripts may serve as an initial test of originality for variation units not included in this study. Wherever these 9 manuscripts grant a strong probability advantage to a given reading, it may be expected to be original. Wherever the advantage is weak or nonexistent, further study would be required.²⁵

CONCLUSION

The computer program produced a preliminary genealogical history for Philippians. It was possible to revise the computer generated tree diagram to produce an optimum configuration defining the genealogical relationships among the manuscripts. The resultant tree diagram exhibited consistency with chronology and the expectations of textual degradation. This reinforced the probability that the tree diagram is a good approximation of the actual history of the text.

The reconstructed history confirmed four ancient text-types and demonstrated that the degradation of the text was gradual and simple. The genealogical history provides an objective means of estimating external probabilities and for evaluating the distribution of readings. In most cases, if not all, internal evidence seems to agree with the genealogical probabilities regarding the identity of original readings. Of the sixteen readings selected as original by this method, nine agree with the choice of the UBSGNT³, and seven disagree. In the latter cases, the objectivity of the method provides reason for greater confidence in the results. It appears that the computer program provided significant help in reconstructing an approximate genealogical history for the text of Philippians and that the resultant history offers some confidence in the recovered original text.

Obviously, more research must be done on genealogical theory, and a more complete textual apparatus must be compiled before significant confidence can be placed in computer-aided textual criticism. However, the results of this project seem to justify such further research. It is hoped that the comments and criticisms of interested scholars will enhance future research on this project.

²⁵To the best degree possible on the basis of the evidence supplied by Metzger in his *Textual Commentary*, these 9 manuscripts seem to support the readings selected by him in the five additional variation units he listed for Philippians.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Message of Genesis 12-50, by Joyce G. Baldwin. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986. Pp. 224. \$7.95. Paper.

Joyce G. Baldwin, former principal of Trinity College, Bristol, has established a reputation for well-done work. Her Tyndale commentaries: *Daniel* and *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, plus her many articles have been well-accepted, and *The Message of Genesis 12-50* will be no different.

Placed in InterVarsity's The Bible Speaks Today series, *The Message of Genesis 12-50* has a three-fold intent: "To expound the biblical text with accuracy, to relate it to contemporary life, and to be readable." As long as one remembers that "expound" here means to apply rather than to interpret Scripture, it can be said that Baldwin has achieved the aim of the series. The work is quite readable since footnotes and references to technical concerns in the text rarely detract from Baldwin's engaging style. Moreover, the application of Genesis to modern life is the heart of the book.

Baldwin's most recent book grew out of a series of Bible expositions at Trinity College tailored to lead the college community to God in worship and prayer. Her approach throughout reveals her conviction that as God spoke to the patriarchs long ago, so he speaks through the patriarchs today to all who listen. Baldwin repeatedly draws parallels between those spiritual lessons confronting the patriarchs with those believers today face. To illustrate, regarding Genesis 15 Baldwin writes, "Abram was learning the basic lesson that every believer in turn has to learn, namely that God's delays are not denials" (p. 51). Also, Baldwin sees in Genesis 15 a portrait of the centrality of faith in every believer's life, a theme she finds repeated in the NT.

At times, Baldwin introduces the reader to the relevance of the text in the broader framework of biblical theology. For example, her examination of Melchizedek incorporates the material from Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7. The author never moves far from her intention to apply the passage though, for her next paragraph contrasts the faith of Melchizedek with the faithlessness of the king of Sodom.

Problems with this book are few. Occasionally the author makes a misleading statement as when she asserts that the language of the Mari letters is close to the language of the Pentateuch (p. 21). One would also hope that the editors of the Bible Speaks Today series would replace the RSV text with the NIV translation, particularly since there is also a NIV translation done especially for Britain. These detractions are minuscule, however, and do not weaken the book.

In conclusion, those wishing guidance in applying the text of Genesis to contemporary life will appreciate this fine work. As long as one remembers that *The Message of Genesis 12-50* is not a commentary, but a devotional work, one will not likely be disappointed.

GEORGE L. KLEIN
CRISWELL COLLEGE

Daniel, by John C. Whitcomb. Everyman's Bible Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1985. Pp. 173. \$5.95. Paper.

Whitcomb's commentary takes its place in a series that has emphasized a popular, devotional approach to Scripture. However, the commentary has considerable depth in historical background, exegesis, and biblical theology. Whitcomb interacts with many other commentaries, both conservative and liberal. He also shows awareness of the periodical literature and scholarly monographs that elucidate the historical setting and exegetical problems of Daniel. He is concerned to show the relationship between Daniel and theology. Thus, this is not just another devotional commentary. Devotional emphasis is indeed present, but it is well balanced with critical and exegetical insight. For this reason Whitcomb's commentary stands above other devotional works by evangelicals.

Whitcomb's approach to Daniel is conservative, premillennial, and dispensational. His interest in Daniel's historicity produced an earlier monograph, *Darius the Mede: The Historical Chronology of Daniel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959). Thus, it is not surprising to see a consistent defense of the authenticity of Daniel as a sixth century B.C. document. The defense is brief yet buttressed by citations from scholarly sources. Passages that are crucial for eschatological systems receive considerable attention, including interaction with amillennial sources. All in all, however, the eschatological emphasis does not obscure Daniel's stress upon God's sovereignty in the present: "The absolute sovereignty and transcendence [sic] of God above all angels and men literally permeates the book" (p. 17).

I do have some reservations about the book, mainly specific matters of interpretation or opinion. I wonder whether it is appropriate to classify John Goldingay as a "liberal" (p. 10). Further, I question whether Baldwin is wrong in viewing Daniel's knowledge of Babylonian culture as a model for believers today (pp. 31-31, cf. pp. 42-43). Though Whitcomb's approach to Daniel's symbolism is more cautious than that of some commentators, I tend to be even more cautious than Whitcomb when approaching the details of Nebuchadnezzar's great image of Daniel 2 (pp. 45, 49; cf. pp. 92, 94-95). I am not convinced by Whitcomb's view that "he" in Dan 11:40-45 is the King of the North, and that these verses should be correlated with the fatal yet temporary wounding of the beast in Revelation 13, 17. These reservations suggest that premillennialists need to come to better terms with the interpretation of apocalyptic literature and its prevalent symbolism.

The format of the book is commendable in its incorporation of the outline into the body of the commentary. Happily, footnotes are used instead of endnotes. One could wish that the typesetters had put the entire outline of Daniel on one page; spreading it over two pages obscures the chiasmic structure of Daniel 2-7 which the outline is meant to convey (pp. 18-19). There are a few typographical errors, e.g., "Kutshcer" (for Kutscher; p. 38, n. 4), the omission of a footnote for a Baldwin citation (p. 74), and the reference to Whitcomb's former title as director of "doctrinal" (for doctoral!) studies at Grace Theological Seminary (back cover).

Overall, I recommend this book highly. Christian "lay" persons as well as students in academic settings will profit from the book. It is a unique

combination of scholarly insight, apologetic purpose, and devotional fervor. Those who use the book in academic settings will wish to supplement it with the scholarly works to which Whitcomb alludes.

DAVID L. TURNER
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

The Letter of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary, by F. F. Bruce. 2nd ed. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Leicester/Grand Rapids: InterVarsity/Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 274. \$5.95. Paper.

In dedicating his commentary on Romans to Simon Grynaeus, John Calvin indicated that he and Grynaeus both "felt that lucid brevity constituted the particular virtue of the interpreter." F. F. Bruce's treatment of Romans lends tacit approval to Calvin's sentiment. This revised edition of Bruce's 1963 work is part of an ongoing project to update the popular Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Leon Morris is editing this commendable updating process. The Tyndale series is one of the best values available in serious NT commentary sets.

In his preface, Bruce relates that he has replaced the *AV* with the *RSV* and incorporated the results of additional research into the revision (p. 10). He acknowledges a special debt to the commentaries of E. Käsemann and C. E. B. Cranfield. A perusal of the volume indicates that Bruce's revisions are largely stylistic. His footnotes have been modified by the deletion of some sources and the addition of more recent ones. Overall it is fair to say that his view of Romans has not changed. A check of three crucial passages illustrates this. On Rom 5:12, Bruce has deleted the following statement which appeared in the 1963 edition (p. 130): "Although the Vulgate rendering of 'for that' (Gk. *eph' hō*) by 'in whom' (Lat. *in quo*) may be a mistranslation, it is a true interpretation." Evidently he has removed this questionable assertion in deference to Cranfield, whom he cites (1985 ed., p. 123).

On another *crux*, Rom 7:14-25, the 1985 discussion rearranges some of the 1963 material but advocates the same view of the passage, namely that Paul describes in these verses his attempt to keep the law in his own strength. Incidentally, this was also the view of Alva J. McClain (*Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace*, ed. H. A. Hoyt [Chicago: Moody, 1973] 150). Though the same view is upheld, an important footnote referring to Mitton's work (1963 ed., p. 153, n. 1) has been deleted, and there are no other sources cited, though several worthy studies could have been mentioned. Here I think Bruce could have shown more deference to other viewpoints.

In his discussion of the restoration of Israel in Romans 11, Bruce's central views appear to be unchanged. He believes that the nation of Israel as a whole will turn to Christ, but he chides dispensationalists that Paul says nothing about a restored Davidic monarchy. Interestingly, the 1985 ed. significantly softens the tone of these remarks, making them agreeable to moderate forms of dispensationalism (1963 ed., p. 221; 1985 ed., p. 208).

From these observations it can be concluded that there is no substantial change between the two editions of the commentary. There have been stylistic modifications and relatively minor additions and deletions that affect only the

mood or flavor of individual paragraphs. Those who own the 1963 ed. need not rush out and purchase the 1985 ed. unless they wish to trace carefully the development in Bruce's thought and profit from his updated footnotes. However, these footnotes are not extensive. I wish that Bruce had interacted in more detail with the views of Käsemann and Cranfield, but this would have detracted from the apparent goal of lucid brevity.

These things aside, it is hard to overestimate the value of the works of F. F. Bruce. His scholarship and clarity of expression are internationally renowned. This exposition of Romans will help specialists and nonspecialists alike study the transforming message of this epistle.

DAVID L. TURNER

GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

The Trinity in the Gospel of John: A Thematic Commentary on the Fourth Gospel, by Royce Gordon Gruenler. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986. Pp. 159. \$9.95. Paper.

Royce Gruenler is a professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Having had "a long flirtation with process theology that endured during the 1960s and ended in the early 1970s," Gruenler "returned to the centrality of the Word," but not without a deep appreciation for the "social nature of God."

The book's preface, in which Gruenler describes his presuppositions, is fifteen pages long. And chap. 1, "The Social Nature of God" (containing more of the same material), amounts to a twenty-two page introduction. There are no footnotes or bibliography, but Gruenler refers to a number of sources within the text of the preface and chap. 1. After the final chapter (chap. 5), there is an appendix defending the historicity of John's Gospel. In the back are subject, author, and Scripture indexes.

The reader may find many of the subtitles confusing or misleading. The terminology may seem strange to those unfamiliar with (former) process writers. Even so, Gruenler tells us that this book, the first of a trilogy on the Trinity, is intended for lay and student readers, as well as professional scholars.

Concentrating on the discourses of Jesus, the author writes with an agenda of proving the mutuality of submission among the persons of the Trinity. He says, "Family, social, and communitarian language" is an "essential component of creation itself" as well as "the central theme of redemptive history" (p. vii). Furthermore, personhood consists not so much in individuality as in being other-centered (p. x). Crucial within the Trinity is the "attribute of disposability," of being available to serve others. This is what Christ did for the lost world. Yet this is also what the members of the Trinity do for each other. Thus, the Father serves the Son. And the "Triune Family," he says, are "servants of a fallen race" (p. xi). We, too, are to "wash one another's feet" within the church and within the world.

Gruenler hopes his "thematic emphasis on mutual servanthood" will not be seen as an attack on God's cosmic order, but he believes that one-way

submission on the part of Jesus (and the Spirit) toward the Father "lands one flatly in subordinationism" (p. xvi). The one-way submission of wife to husband (a doctrine that he finds debatable) is, according to Gruenler, itself rooted in the fall and is a necessary evil (cf. pp. xv-xvii). But he overlooks the argument of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 that establishes woman's subordination from the point of *creation*. Gruenler asserts that Christ submitted himself voluntarily to (by mutual agreement with) the Father in the case of man's redemption (p. xvii), and says that this was a special case—in other matters the Father "defers to" the Son. However, 1 Corinthians 11 says that God is the head of Christ and man is the head of woman in the divine order of things, not on a case-by-case or mutually agreed-upon basis. The Trinity is not a committee. Besides, all obedience, whether voluntary or necessary, is one-way.

In chaps. 2-5 (the "commentary" section of the book), Gruenler moves chronologically through John "to see how mutual loving, generosity, glorification, equality, availability, disposability, and deference characterize the divine Family in the Gospel as a whole" (p. 23) (i.e., to prove his thesis of mutual submission among the persons of the Godhead).

The book is indeed "a thematic commentary." The approach taken cannot be called exegetical. There is no persuasive synthesis of the book. Nor does Gruenler integrate his commentary with the purpose of John (cf. John 20:31). Instead, he proceeds through the Gospel, picking out verses here and there, attempting to relate the Gospel of John to his theme.

Gruenler does provide a fresh perspective on the interrelations among the persons of the Trinity. He reminds his readers that God is not a tyrant, but a loving Father, genuinely and totally committed to the well-being of his creatures, and that the Trinity is a community of persons who love each other, a notion very different from the modalism, adoptionism, etc., found among process theologians.

Nevertheless, Gruenler misses the mark both linguistically and theologically when he makes all the persons of the Trinity servants of one another and of man. God is not man's servant, and the church is not the world's servant. He confuses loving concern with service.

Most laymen and pastors will find this book difficult to read and not very helpful. It is recommended, however, for graduate students and other scholars interested in contemplation of this theme or in studying the writings of former process theologians.

ROBERT J. DELLA VALLE
DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Christian Theology, vol. 3, by Millard J. Erickson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985. Pp. 845-1274. \$19.95. Cloth.

Vol. 3 of *Christian Theology* is dedicated to Wolfhart Pannenberg, one of Erickson's theological mentors, which is appropriate because of the subjects considered: the Holy Spirit, salvation, the Church, and eschatology. Given the response to the first two volumes of this series, vol. 3 has been

highly anticipated. Perhaps because of the heightened anticipation, my response was disappointment.

The treatment of the Holy Spirit is brief. There is little discussion devoted to the Spirit in the OT. The author rightly focuses upon the deity and personality of the Spirit, though not to the neglect of the Spirit's power. Following the pattern of the earlier volumes, Erickson addresses the contemporary issues, in this case the charismatic movement. He cautiously concludes that it is difficult to determine whether the contemporary phenomena are authentic. He properly decides that the charismata are sovereignly given and are not to be sought.

As indicated from his discussion of the decrees of God in vol. 1, Erickson treats the salvific themes from a moderately Calvinistic perspective. Although his discussion of these issues seems to be hurriedly written and lacks the creativity that has been Erickson's forte, he does provide a nice summary of justification, adoption, sanctification, and other major themes. Salvation, he says, is ultimately the restoration of a proper relationship with God.

The subject of the third section is the church—both local and universal. The finest parts discuss baptism and the Lord's Supper. He rightly sees the Lord's presence at the supper (a Calvinistic position) but does not see this as an existential encounter (contra contemporary existential theologians). He understands baptism to be a testimony of salvation. He leans toward immersion as the proper form of baptism, though he seems open to other modes. I was hoping for interaction with pressing issues within evangelicalism such as the role of women and the place of the parachurch movement. Realizing that he had carefully entered into dialogue with present concerns in previous volumes, I quickly looked for these matters upon receiving this volume, but they were not to be found.

The section on eschatology is a re-working of his *Contemporary Options in Eschatology*. He treats dispensationalism as an aberrant approach side-by-side with radical eschatologies, existential eschatologies, and theologies of hope. Considering the predominance of dispensationalism in evangelicalism, it at least deserved to be treated alongside amillennialism, postmillennialism, and historical premillennialism. Erickson contends for a historical premillennial position, as expected based upon his earlier work in *Contemporary Options*. Erickson stresses that eschatology should be studied not only for its information about last things, but for its present meaning. He draws our attention to apocalyptic elements concerning pictures of heaven and hell. Consistent with his overall evangelicalism, he denies universalism.

My disappointment is no doubt due to my high anticipation and expectation. This, perhaps, says more about me than Erickson's writing. Yet, I have the impression that this volume did not receive the careful attention of vols. 1 and 2. This does not detract from the usefulness of the entire series, and I look forward to the publication of all three volumes in one. The evangelical community will be in debt to Millard Erickson for years to come. This series will without doubt become a standard textbook in evangelical seminaries and colleges.

DAVID S. DOCKERY
CRISWELL COLLEGE

Unmasking the New Age, by Douglas R. Groothuis. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986. Pp. 192. \$6.95. Paper.

"Is there a new religious movement trying to transform society?" Groot-huis, an instructor at the McKenzie Study Center in Eugene, Oregon, takes this question as a launching pad for his exploration of the New Age movement.

In his first chapter, the author identifies six distinctives of New Age thinking, contrasting them with a Christian world view. These distinctives are:

1. All is One. This is monism: all that is, is one. "Ultimately," the author states, "there is no difference between God, a person, a carrot or a rock" (p. 18). The basic premise of the New Age movement is monism. Gordon R. Lewis in the Foreword describes monism as "the terminal disease at the heart of the New Age movement" (p. 9).
2. All is God. This is pantheism. All is one, all is god. New Age thinking abandons the idea of a personal God and opts for an impersonal force or consciousness.
3. Humanity is God. According to New Age thinking, we are all gods. Self-deification must be claimed and practiced.
4. A Change in Consciousness. We must leave our ignorance behind and arrive at a transformed consciousness that "all is one, all is god, and we are god" (p. 24). This transformation can come through varied techniques such as meditation, yoga, or EST (Erhard Seminars Training).
5. All Religions are One. This is syncretism. Christianity and Christ are no longer distinctive.
6. Cosmic Evolutionary Optimism. Teilhard de Chardin, a leader in New Age thinking, predicts progressive evolution to the point that all will become one with the One.

After building this foundation, Groothuis proceeds through the book, describing the historical background of the New Age movement. The author finds its roots in the counterculture of the 1950s and 1960s. He clarifies the development of the New Age by tracing the contributions of both people and movements.

Next, the book considers the development of New Age thinking in the areas of holistic health, psychology, science, politics, and the new spirituality. In a chapter on each, Groothuis demonstrates understanding and balanced judgment in evaluating the fermenting influence of New Age thinking. In the conclusion of each chapter he offers a biblical point of view.

In the final chapter, the author not only summarizes his findings, but he also brings the New Age movement to account before the essentials of a Christian world view. He includes a helpful chart comparing the Secular Humanist, New Age, and Christian World Views (p. 167). A methodology for witnessing to New Age practitioners forms a fitting conclusion to the book.

In summary, Groothuis provides a straightforward but nonalarmist evaluation of the New Age movement. He documents his writing with exten-

sive footnoting and references to other works. An annotated section on Related Reading will effectively serve those who would pursue a further understanding of New Age thinking.

PAUL A. BEALS

GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography, by Carl F. H. Henry. Waco: Word, 1986. Pp. 416. \$14.95. Cloth.

Carl Henry's importance to twentieth century evangelicalism dictated that his story had to be written. The church has benefited because he has written the story himself. The reader finds that Henry is not an ivory tower philosopher/theologian but a down-to-earth disciple who possesses a lively sense of humor and a deep sensitivity for the people of the world. Delightful to read, this book lifts the reader to the heights of the successes of this leading evangelical thinker, teacher, and writer, and drops him to the depths of discouragement by exposing the "family squabbles" that have plagued various evangelical enterprises.

Born to German immigrant parents in New York in 1913, Henry grew up among poverty and prejudice—a situation that provided him with a perspective on life that many evangelicals have failed to develop. Excelling in school, he did not advance as well in his spiritual pilgrimage. Pronounced as regenerate at the time of his baptism, Henry has now written: "I was, in fact, no more regenerate than the Long Island telephone directory" (p. 26). The reader is introduced to the widow, Mildred Christy (later referred to as Mother Christy), who was influential in the Lord's work of conversion in Henry's life. He writes that being on the prayer lists of Mrs. Christy, two of her friends in Ohio, and believers around him "was like being at the mercy of an air assault" (p. 36).

At the time of his conversion, Henry had distinguished himself as a newspaperman. At the age of nineteen, he was the editor of the *Smithtown Star*, a weekly Long Island newspaper. Overtaken by the leading of God to prepare for a full-time Christian vocation, Henry enrolled at Wheaton College in the fall of 1935. Prominent Wheaton professors such as Henry C. Thiessen and Gordon H. Clark are described from the perspective of a student. Among his extra-curricular activities, the young student-newspaperman and part-time typing teacher courted one of his students, Helga Bender, who was to become Mrs. Henry. The indefatigable persistence that characterized his future ministry was demonstrated in the courtship. An example of the humor interspersed throughout the book is found in a footnote: "At Helga's intervention, to spare them possible embarrassment, I have not named others of the fair sex whom I dated at Wheaton. But I wish nonetheless to indicate my appreciation to Wheaton lasses who added zest and luster to those campus days" (p. 78).

While pursuing further education at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Henry entered the ministry of teaching. He had been active in a

variety of Christian ministries at Wheaton and in seminary. Of special significance was his involvement with the National Association of Evangelicals. Henry was enticed to leave Northern Baptist to assist in establishing an evangelical seminary in the west, Fuller Theological Seminary. Henry presents the story of the founding and problems of that institution as an insider who saw clearly initial needs as well as the perilous steps taken later with regard to biblical inerrancy. While a Fuller professor, he assisted in the founding of the Evangelical Theological Society.

From Fuller, Henry moved to take a position as founding editor of *Christianity Today*. Using his skills as a theologian and a newspaperman, Henry brought the periodical to a place of preeminence among evangelical publications. Founded as an alternative to the liberal slant of *Christian Century*, *Christianity Today* soon surpassed that publication in circulation. At the same time, he found himself in conflict with the views of some who were not happy with his editorial approach. Board member and Sun Oil leader, J. Howard Pew, was a constant critic. Pew planned to give strong financial backing to the magazine but, in turn, wished to have the right to inspect advance proofs of the periodical. Faced with difficult financial straits, Henry whimsically thought: "God owned the cattle on a thousand hills no less than the oil that Sunoco pumped" (p. 168). The behind the scenes conflict at *Christianity Today* ended for Henry after more than a decade of service with his being "terminated" in bumbling fashion.

Henry describes his short term of service at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary with an assessment of problems at that institution. Having left that school, he became lecturer-at-large for World Vision. He describes world travels and ministry resulting from that position. Throughout the book, the author's experiences with Christians worldwide are described, including the moving account of meeting with believers in communist Europe. Henry concludes, "These devout workers in Marxist lands reminded me of Paul's observation to the Corinthians, 'having nothing, and yet possessing everything'" (p. 319). His travels to the orient for World Vision deepen our understanding of the state of the church in that part of the world.

The last chapter is entitled "The Evangelical Prospect in America." It includes a discussion of nine observations about the contemporary scene and exhibits the great insight that has become a hallmark of the work of Carl Henry.

The book moves at a good pace and is difficult to put down. The reader might get bogged down in Henry's travels, but most of the descriptions include helpful discussions regarding God's servants in these lands. One less-than-satisfying chapter is "A Workaholic's Sabbatical." Here, Henry records his contacts with many of the prominent names in European theology, but little is written about these meetings. However, articles in *Christianity Today* and the subsequent book, *Frontiers in Modern Theology*, present discussions of those encounters in some detail. Henry includes accounts of the World Congress of Evangelism at Berlin in 1966 and Key 73, along with other events. There is some repetition (compare pages 174 and 219). The index to the book consists of names of persons. Additional indexes would have enhanced the book.

Autobiographies can be stimulating, provocative, informative, and inspirational reading material. *Confessions of a Theologian* is all of these in its unveiling of the life and mind of one of the most significant of God's servants in the twentieth century.

RONALD T. CLUTTER
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Evangelical Theology: A Survey and Review, by Robert P. Lightner. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986. Pp. 303. \$15.95. Cloth.

In the future, the 1980s may well be regarded as a key decade for the publication of comprehensive systematic theologies by American evangelicals. While the 1970s produced some significant works (M. Wynkoop, J. Boice, D. Bloesch, the revised H. Thiessen, and the first four volumes of Carl Henry's *magnum opus*), it has been in the 80s that evangelical systematic theology has come of age. Henry's six volumes now stand complete. Major sets have appeared or are in process from J. Cottrell, M. Erickson, B. Demarest and G. Lewis, T. Finger, and T. Oden. Wesleyans have produced a two-volume set edited by C. Carter, R. Thompson, and C. Wilson. The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*, and *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* have also been produced. Boice's and Erickson's theologies are now available in one volume editions. And, D. Moody, J. Davis, J. Lawson, and C. Ryrie have produced handy and helpful introductions.

Now Lightner has made a worthwhile contribution. The volume is written for evangelicals and "is intended for classroom use in Christian liberal arts and Bible colleges where surveys of doctrine are taught." The author feels that his work will also "fill a need on the seminary level as a review of systematic theology," and will be useful to busy pastors and other Christian workers for "brushing up" on their theology (p. 2). It is important to understand Lightner's goal, which is not to write a systematic theology per se, but to whet the reader's appetite for further study and to encourage theological thinking.

In light of this stated audience and goal, *Evangelical Theology* is a success. It would probably not be ideal as an unassisted layperson's introduction to systematic theology, for it does not enter into argumentation enough to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of varying positions. But in the classroom, where the material can be expanded, explained, and discussed, the book can be helpful.

The basic areas of systematic theology are covered in nine chapters. What is refreshing and somewhat unique about the work is its approach. Each chapter, after a brief introduction, has three main parts: a historical perspective, a basic statement of the doctrine, and major areas of difference among evangelicals. At the end of each chapter are a few paragraphs of application, questions for discussion, and bibliographical suggestions for further study. Notes are at the foot of each page, and there are in some chapters

useful charts, lists and diagrams. The indexes (names, subjects, and scripture) add to the value of the work.

While Lightner's historical overviews are generally well done, in places they are too brief to be helpful. For example, the contributions of John Owen, Abraham Kuyper, J. N. Darby, and William Kelly in the area of pneumatology are all considered within eleven lines (pp. 106-7)! And Marcion, Montanus, and Donatus are mentioned briefly under ecclesiology as agreeing that the church needed reform, but there is no subsequent development of their positions (p. 220).

The author's viewpoint is somewhere in the middle of traditional dispensationalism. His material is more than an outline, yet less than a full exposition. There is little exegesis. Lightner usually puts scripture references in parentheses after stating each point, or refers in a footnote to some work which the reader may consult for a fuller discussion. These procedures, while understandable in light of the author's space limitations and purpose, may be somewhat frustrating for the reader. It is difficult at times to see how the scriptures teach the indicated doctrine, as when Lightner concludes that "holy angels abide in the second heaven but have access to the presence of God in third heaven" (p. 135). As for the many places where Lightner depends on a footnote instead of developing a key point (e.g., pp. 95, 209 nn. 14, 214), the reader may not have ready access to the suggested works.

The most interesting aspect of the book concerns the major areas of difference among evangelicals. In these matters Lightner presents the views fairly and clearly. For the most part he chooses areas that have been traditional centers of debate. Under theology proper, for example, he considers the classification of God's attributes, the knowledge of God, and the Calvinist-Arminian debate over God's purposes (he describes himself as a "moderate Calvinist"). Unfortunately he does not consider the infiltration of the thinking behind Process Theology into evangelical views of God. While he does not always make his own view known (as when considering the relation between the human and divine attributes of Christ or the conditionality of election), he usually does reveal his stand to the reader. On the value of Christ's life sufferings, he holds to a "non-atoning" view as opposed to the vicarious substitutionary view of Reformed theology. In addition, Lightner advocates the position that Christ was not able to sin. The sign-gifts were for the first generation of Christians only. Christians cannot be demon-possessed, and the ability to exorcise demons is not available today.

At times he feels that both sides of an issue are needed to present the biblical teaching, as when he considers dichotomy and trichotomy, and the federal and seminal views of Adam. On the immaterial nature of human beings, he is a traducianist, and appears to prefer Buswell's view of the *imago Dei* as both constitutional and functional. He holds to a universal atonement. On the question "must Christ be Lord to be Savior?" he leans to a "no" answer, but then states that "no one can become a child of God unless he *fully intends* to serve and obey Christ" (p. 213, emphasis added). The section on the debate over sanctification (Reformed versus Keswick) is much too condensed to be helpful. On ecclesiology he argues cogently against Landmarkists and others who deny the reality of the universal Church. He sees the

Church as having begun at Pentecost, holds to congregational government, and does not see a plurality of elders as being necessary in every local church. His eschatology is, of course, premillennial and pretribulational.

Many evangelicals will object that the title of the book is inaccurate, since there is little interaction with major evangelical thinkers of the 1980s (the author leans most heavily on Hodge, Warfield, Berkhof, Chafer, Walvoord, and Ryrie). Others will be disappointed that there is no interaction with current non-evangelical trends such as Process and Liberation Theologies. While admitting the validity of these criticisms, we should remember the word "review" in Lightner's subtitle. The foundation Lightner lays herein will be useful in pointing students to those scripture texts and theological concepts which in any generation form the core of Christian faith.

ROBERT V. RAKESTRAW
CRISWELL COLLEGE

In Pursuit of Purity, by David O. Beale. Greenville, S.C.: Unusual Publications, 1986. Pp. xvi + 457. \$15.95. Cloth. \$12.95. Paper.

Whereas most recent publications have focused on the fundamentalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Beale's contribution traces the movement from what he concludes to be its roots in the 1850s down to the present. He not only has sought to present a survey history but also has propagandized for a particular type of fundamentalism. Thus this book must be contrasted to *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon*, edited by Jerry Falwell. Beale contends for a separatist, militant fundamentalism identified with the post-1930 state of the movement. Falwell's work espouses the pre-1930 non-separatist attitude.

The primary focus for Beale is separation. He writes "Today, one may vigorously uphold the traditional fundamentals and still fall far short of actually being a fundamentalist" (p. 7). He clarifies:

In both the Hebrew and Greek languages, the word *holiness*, or *sanctification*, carries the basic idea of separation. The positive side of separation is the concept of biblical fellowship. Progressively, Fundamentalism came to emphasize that the Scriptures clearly teach certain criteria for true Christian fellowship. They now regard the doctrine of biblical fellowship as fundamental, inherently part of the doctrine of God's absolute holiness—separation (sanctification) from the world, from false religion, and from every practice of disobedience to the Scriptures [p. 6].

In Beale's opinion the "new evangelicals" have "forsaken the doctrine of biblical holiness and the practice of ecclesiastical purity" which are "trade-marks of Fundamentalism" (p. 10). At this point, one is confronted with an apologetic emphasis like that of George Dollar's *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, though Beale does not reflect the Baptist bias of Dollar. Beale asserts as Dollar did: "The only true Fundamentalist is the fighting Fundamentalist" (p. 357).

Beale's contribution does serve as a helpful survey of the origin and development of the movement. The author has supplied information on the

prayer meeting revivals and Bible conferences, which he regards as the roots of fundamentalism. Participants and titles of particular messages at some conference meetings are given. Pictures of some early speakers enhance the appeal of this section.

Beale then turns from examining the roots of one movement to the development and impact of another—liberalism. He describes various responses to liberal theological influence, especially as the liberal/fundamentalist conflict progressed within Presbyterian and Baptist churches where the issues were fought with the greatest tenacity. The final section of the book focuses upon the development of separatist fundamentalism and the present state of the movement.

A survey of the many footnotes and the bibliography brings an appreciation for the author's awareness of the material on the subject. He has not written out of the vacuum in which fundamentalists are sometimes thought to exist. The appendices are helpful additions to a well-written, easily understandable book.

However, the work is marred by questionable assertions and inaccuracies. In the index there are nine page-references listed for Grace Brethren. In turning to those pages, the reader finds that on only two occasions do the texts refer to the Grace Brethren. Four of the references are to the Plymouth Brethren, and one each to the Church of the Brethren, "English Brethren," and the Evangelical United Brethren, the latter mistakenly identified as "the United Evangelical Brethren" (p. 311). Augustus H. Strong is said to be remembered for his concordance and his systematic theology when it was James Strong who produced the concordance. Bernard Ramm is declared to have embraced and defended the theology of Karl Barth though Ramm puts distance between himself and Barth in *After Fundamentalism*, to which Beale refers (p. 266). Clark Pinnock is classed as a "new evangelical convert to liberalism" (p. 267). Though Pinnock's writings may perplex some evangelicals, he is not a liberal. Presbyterians of a former era, Charles R. Erdman, Frederick W. Loetscher and J. Ritchie Smith are identified as "tolerant of the new liberalizing trends of the day" (p. 166), a charge which they strongly denied. J. Ross Stevenson is said to have been a champion for the Plan of Organic Union but, in fact, he opposed it when his presbytery was called upon to vote on the issue.

The Bob Jones perspective is reflected throughout the work with the university and the name often mentioned. Such references are understandable in light of the influence of the family and the school upon fundamentalism, but it is this reviewer's conclusion that there seems to be too much emphasis on the Bob Jones contribution. Why was an entire chapter given to Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church in Ireland and only a few lines to the ministry of John R. Rice and *The Sword of the Lord*?

In conclusion, this book is a helpful and readable contribution to the subject from a particular viewpoint. With its inaccuracies and questionable categorizations it also reveals some of the weaknesses of the militant-separatist mindset that it seeks to promote.

Beyond Hunger: A Biblical Mandate for Social Responsibility, by Art Beals. Portland: Multnomah, 1985. Pp. 225. \$11.95. Cloth

Art Beals wants American Christians to understand and to feel the ravages of Third World hunger and deprivation. He wants American Christians to aid other human beings in need, both because they are emotionally moved to do so and because their faith mandates such help.

Beals encourages something he calls Christian development—"a process that enables people to consider, choose, and implement alternatives for their lives that are consistent with God's intention for mankind" (p. 87). He believes this approach goes beyond "relief" or rescuing, to "development" or enabling.

This approach involves a more efficient use of Christian resources, exercising a better stewardship. In fact, Beals believes a right perspective on faithful stewardship inexorably leads one to a desire to share worldly possessions—not hoard them as many Western Christians are so prone to do. In Beals's words, "if the sense of community with the world-wide 'household of faith' is lost, the essential character of the Church becomes violated. A Western Christian church enjoying its affluence in a world where large communities of believers live in absolute poverty is a scandal to the gospel—a denial of our oneness in Christ" (p. 201).

Beals's work fits into a growing body of evangelical development literature wrestling with the complexities of directed social change. Although most evangelicals remain committed to personal evangelism as the most effective "tool" for social transformation, many now recognize that more can, and perhaps should, be done to the glory of God. For many, the question is not so much whether evangelical social activity should be encouraged, but how much and what kind? Theological issues are raised in this debate because answers to such questions depend upon one's view of the nature of evil, hermeneutics, the Kingdom of God (eschatology), and soteriology.

Beals should be commended for avoiding the subtle temptation to overstate his case by stretching theological boundaries. For instance, he argues that social responsibility goes hand-in-hand with evangelism. But he backs away from claiming social action *is* the gospel, as many contemporary evangelical authors claim. Nor does he gloss over the reality of sin and evil in the world. Beals expresses a certain optimism in his title, "Beyond Hunger." But he recognizes the need for continual self-evaluation and diligence. All would-be social reformers must acknowledge the possibility that "today's liberators will become tomorrow's oppressors" (p. 120).

Although he never uses the term, Beals encourages "tentmaking" in overseas "redemptive communities." By using this method, Christians may reach the lost in otherwise closed settings. For Beals, there are no closed doors, only closed minds blind to new approaches and opportunities.

The book's strength is at the same time its primary weakness. Although the text is loaded with illustrations drawn from Beals's rich and varied experience, the sequential stories eventually create a choppy style that is difficult to read. One illustration blurs into the next. More importantly, the book fails to live up to its subtitle. More space is clearly given to an appeal to the reader's emotions than to any rationally developed understanding of the

biblical text. As helpful as Beals's stories are, the number of them detracts from his purpose. The reader would be better served by a more balanced approach.

Beals errs by identifying linear interpretations of human history solely with classical liberalism, and by rejecting linear views of history as non-Christian. He complicates his mistake further by embracing an eastern rise and fall or cyclical interpretation. Although his point is a good one—that one needs to be aware of both good and evil—his choice of interpretive paradigm is faulty. Scripture does assign a teleology to human history and rejects any meaningless, cyclical understanding of life. As Beals says, history is not a steady progression toward the “good life” in the now. But history is a divinely ordained movement, with both “wheat” and “tares,” toward God’s resolution. To teach otherwise is to deny God’s sovereignty.

Academic audiences will find Beals’s work a bit frustrating in another way. Statistics and quotations are freely used throughout, but no documentation is provided. Terms are sometimes loosely used. What, for example, is a “world economic system”? Beals refers to it but never defines it.

Shortcomings notwithstanding, the book is worthwhile. Loving one’s neighbor is at the heart of the Christian ethic. Perhaps Beals’s most notable contribution is to leave the reader with a developed sense of neighborhood. People are dying—physically and spiritually—the world over. American Christendom needs the dose of reality Beals prescribes. And the world needs the energy, resources, and compassion of American Christendom.

REX M. ROGERS
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

Anthropological Insights for Missionaries, by Paul G. Hiebert. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985. Pp. 315. \$13.95. Paper.

Anthropological Insights for Missionaries combines basic anthropology with missionary experience to transport the foreign mission candidate step-by-step from home through culture shock to concerns over retirement. This cross-cultural manual is written by a veteran as “an attempt to provide young missionaries with some basic tools for understanding other cultures and for understanding themselves as they enter these cultures” (p. 10). Hiebert draws upon his own background in India as well as from other “Two-Thirds World” cultures to illustrate concepts and anthropological terms. For instance, ethnocentrism (judging another culture to be inferior to one’s own culture) works both ways. While some North Americans perceive eating with one’s fingers as crude and dirty, an Indian would note that he washes his hand carefully before eating, never places his fingers in anyone else’s mouth, and never eats with a fork which has been in the mouths of strangers.

One of the major contributions of this volume is its exposure of North American worldviews and their effects upon Western thinking. Neo-Platonism, materialism, the right of private ownership, individualism, equality, the emphasis upon youth, and quantification are some of the assumptions examined. They are not analyzed from a scriptural perspective, but from a sociological

and cross-cultural point of view. People in more traditional cultures simply think differently about these matters, a fact that has implications for cross-cultural communications. Readers are introduced to variations in symbol systems, use of gestures, the significance of time and space, and the social importance of factors such as age, gender, and status. Societal concerns take into account the missionary community; church-mission structures; first-, second-, and third-generation missionaries; the national community; and the relationship between national leaders and the national community.

Hiebert writes as a social scientist who is sympathetic to the cause of world missions, and not as a theologian. This is acknowledged in the preface. The author does refer, however, to "a transcultural theology that transcends cultural differences—a metatheology that compares theologies, explores the cultural biases of each, and seeks to find biblical universals" (p. 217). Exposing the cultural "blind spots" of Western, Latin American, or Indian theology from another cultural perspective can be beneficial, but correction and accurate theology ultimately come from exposure to the Scriptures alone. The application of truth may vary from culture to culture, but the biblical universals can be discerned only through examination of the biblical text. Hiebert does acknowledge the centrality of Scripture as the first test of truth (p. 202), and he recognizes that all human understanding and man-made theologies are flawed.

Theological distinctions aside, Hiebert makes a valuable contribution to the field of missiology. The work is well documented with a helpful bibliography to assist in additional reading. The general reader who wishes to be informed on the ramifications of the current missionary outreach to non-Western cultures will benefit from this book.

ROBERT G. PARR
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

Introducing the Sermon, by Michael J. Hostetler. *The Craft of Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. Pp. 89. \$5.95. Paper.

This slender volume is a contribution to *The Craft of Preaching* series begun recently by Zondervan's Ministry Resource Library. Its compactness, affordability, and readability are indications that Zondervan is seriously pursuing a wide audience for the series.

The perennial evangelical interest in preaching is demonstrated by the publication of a large number of books on homiletics. Thus, one might think that virtually every aspect of the sermonic enterprise has suffered from overexposure, especially an element as visible as the introduction.

Not so, says author Hostetler: "In spite of their insistence on the introduction's importance, the major texts devote precious little space to it" (p. 12). He says, therefore, "Clearly, sermon introductions deserve a closer look" (p. 12).

Throughout the book, the author exhibits his firm conviction that, "In many ways, the introduction is the most important part of sermon delivery" (p. 11). This is true because "Exposition is the preacher's great work, but if

the introduction falters, the exposition may never be heard" (p. 12). Whether or not the reader will agree with such statements, this is the premise on which the rest of the argument is built; it is a homiletical necessity to cultivate "The Art of Compelling Beginnings" (the book's subtitle).

Introducing the Sermon contains eight chapters and a brief conclusion. In chap. 1, "The Palm of Your Hand" (pp. 11-15), the writer makes his case for the importance of the sermon introduction and briefly addresses such questions as "What's the purpose of the introduction?" "Is an introduction always needed?" and "How long should the introduction be?" Then chap. 2, "Make Contact" (pp. 17-26), leads in to the rest of the book by laying out the four "contact points" of a good introduction: (1) the secular (or "life experience"), (2) the biblical, (3) the personal, and (4) the structural (p. 17).

Chaps. 3 and 4, "Start with the Secular" (pp. 27-39) and "Spice Up the Secular" (pp. 41-47) respectively, handle the first contact point, giving special attention to the opening sentence and the need for detail. The next two chapters, "Move to the Word" (pp. 49-57) and "Link with the Sermon Series" (pp. 59-66), develop the "biblical" point of contact, first with the immediate text and then in its place, if appropriate, in a wider series of sermons. Chap. 7, "Touch Home" (pp. 67-75), deals with the "personal" contact point, needed because "every person who listens to the sermon wants to know what it means for his or her life" (p. 75). Finally, chap. 8, "Build a Bridge" (pp. 78-83), has to do with the "structural" connection between the introduction and body of the sermon. The "Conclusion" (pp. 85-86) urges the disciplined use of all four contact points and offers a few closing suggestions for developing better sermon introductions.

All in all, this is a refreshing and helpful book, especially for the beginning student and the busy preacher. Its theory, stated concisely in chap. 2, is simple and concrete. There are numerous illustrations spread throughout the text that show "how to" every step along the way. Such features argue eloquently for this volume's place on the conscientious expositor's bookshelf.

However, this effective tool could have been improved. A Scripture Index and, perhaps, a Subject Index would have been of real value. Also, some discussion of the place and work of the Holy Spirit in this process would have made it less "mechanical." As it is, there is only one passing reference to the Spirit (p. 75). This is in marked contrast to Lloyd-Jones's *Preaching and Preachers*, which concludes with a chapter entitled "Demonstration of the Spirit and Power," and the more recent *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, by W. Kaiser, the final stanza of which is "The Exegete/Pastor and the Power of God."

One other point: having published *Introducing the Sermon*, it is now incumbent upon Zondervan to make available a suitable text on sermon conclusions. This is especially true if there is any validity to Kaiser's claim that Evangelicals have recently "overindulged ourselves in the art of introducing texts and messages" to the detriment of the "clearly-thought-out conclusion" (*Toward an Exegetical Theology*, p. 163).

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Retelling the Biblical Story: The Theology and Practice of Narrative Preaching, by H. Stephen Shoemaker. Nashville: Broadman, 1985. Pp. 180. n.p. Paper.

H. Stephen Shoemaker gathers sixteen of his sermons to illustrate his approach to the kind of sermonizing usually labeled "narrative preaching." He introduces the collection with a sermon on what he calls the Biblical Story, "the Story of God's way with us and our way with God," and concludes the book with a chapter presenting his theology of preaching and a few suggestions concerning the preparation of narrative sermons. Between Introduction and Conclusion there are sermons on eleven OT saints, two NT believers, and an example of the narrative approach applied to the book of Revelation.

Shoemaker understands preaching to be "the telling of the Biblical Story." He affirms that preaching's purpose is to "help the hearer meet the God of the Bible and Jesus Christ, who has shown us God's face, and having met them, to follow in faith and obedience." Preaching's task, then, is to "recreate the biblical world in vividness and truth . . . so that the hearer is beckoned to enter it and, as an inhabitant of that world, a child of God, and a disciple of Jesus Christ, to live in God's 'righteousing' power and Jesus' power of love" (148).

Shoemaker contends that most of today's preaching follows one of two models: "Preacher Directed" or "Hearer Centered." In the former, the preacher directs attention to himself, assuming that people learn best by hearing a testimony of another's experience of truth in his life. The "confessional preaching" of John R. Claypool illustrates this model. The latter model turns the attention to the hearer, and the preacher becomes either "Angry Father or Sensitive Pastor." There is much preaching that fits the "Angry Father" model today, preaching that uses guilt as the major motivational appeal in a context filled with "you ought." The "Sensitive Pastor" is exemplified by Harry Emerson Fosdick in his "life-situational" preaching. Discounting both of these models as inadequate, Shoemaker presents a third model, which he labels "Recreating the Biblical World." In this model, emphasis is on neither the preacher nor the congregation, but on the story of God's work in the world and man's response to it, and the preacher becomes the storyteller. The approach, illustrated by the sermons in the book, tends to use the biographical material of a whole life for one sermon, drawing general truths from that life, but giving no portion of it any close scrutiny.

There are advantages to Shoemaker's narrative style of preaching. Whether or not the reader agrees with Shoemaker's theology of preaching, he will find fresh ways to express biblical truth. In addition, Shoemaker's footnotes introduce many helps to better narrative preaching; e.g., Frederick Buechner, *Peculiar Treasures*; Fred B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel: Preaching and Teaching the Faith to People Who Have Already Heard*; and Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*.

Shoemaker's book may provide the stimulus needed to attempt added variety in one's preaching. Moreover, it illustrates how that can be accomplished. That alone makes it worthwhile reading.

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